

# REFLECTIONS

On the CAUSES of

The RISE and FALL

OF THE

# ROMAN EMPIRE.

Translated from the FRENCH of  
M. D E S E C O N D A T,  
BARON DE MONTESQUIEU,  
Author of *L'Esprit des Loix*.

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V O L. II.

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The S E C O N D E D I T I O N.  
With great ADDITIONS and IMPROVEMENTS.

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L O N D O N,

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# REFLECTIONS

## ON THE

### CAUSES *of the* RISE *and* FALL *of the* ROMAN EMPIRE.

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#### CHAP. XV.

#### AUGUSTUS.

**S**EXTUS POMPEIUS possessed Sicily and Sardinia, was master at sea, and saw himself at the head of a great multitude of fugitives, and persons devoted to death by proscriptions, whose last hopes depended on their valour. Octavius contended with him, in two very laborious wars; and after a variety of ill success, vanquished him by the abilities of Agrippa.

Most of the conspirators ended their lives in a miserable manner, and it was natural that persons who headed a party, so frequently harassed by wars, in which no quarter was afforded, should die a violent death. That event was however interpreted into a consequence of divine vengeance, which punished the murderers of Cæsar, and in its turn proscribed their cause.

Octavius gained over the soldiers of Lepidus to his own interest, and divested him

of his power in the triumvirate ; he even envied him the consolation of passing the remainder of his days in obscurity, and compelled him to appear as a private man, in the assemblies of the people.

It is impossible for any one to be displeased at the humiliation of this Lepidus ; he was the most depraved citizen in all the republic, a constant promoter of disturbances, and one who perpetually formed fatal schemes, wherein he was obliged to associate with people of more ability than himself. A modern author \* has thought fit to be large in his commendation, and cites Antony, who, in one of his letters, represents him as an honest man. But he, who had that character from Antony, could not have much title to it from other persons.

I believe Octavius is the only man, of all the Roman generals, who ever gained the affections of the soldiers, by giving them perpetual instances of a natural timidity of spirit. The soldiers, at that time, were more affected with the liberality of their commanders, than their valour ; perhaps it was even fortunate for him, that he was not master of any qualities which could procure him the empire, and that his very incapacity should be the cause of his promotion to it, since it made him the less dreaded. It is not impossible that the defects which

\* The abbé de St. Real.

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threw the greatest dishonor on his character, were the most propitious to his fortune. If he had discovered, at first, any traces of an exalted soul, all mankind would have been jealous of his abilities; and if he had been spirited by any true bravery, he would not have given Antony time to launch into all the extravagancies which proved his ruin.

When Antony was preparing to march against Octavius, he assured his soldiers, by a solemn oath, that he would restore the republic; which makes it evident, that even They were jealous of the liberty of their country, tho' they were the perpetual instruments of its destruction; for an army is the blindest and most inconsiderate set of people in the world.

The battle of Actium was fought, Cleopatra fled, and drew Antony after her. It evidently appeared by the circumstances of her future conduct, that she afterwards betrayed him<sup>f</sup>; perhaps that incomprehensible spirit of coquetry, so predominant in her sex, tempted her to practice all her arts to lay a third sovereign of the world at her feet.

The most surprizing circumstance in those wars is, that one battle should generally decide the difference, and that one defeat should be irreparable.

<sup>f</sup> Dion. l. li.

The Roman soldiers were not, properly, under the prevalence of any party spirit; they did not fight for any particular acquisition, but for some particular person; they only knew their commander, who engaged their service by prodigious hopes, but when he was once defeated, and consequently no longer in a condition to accomplish his promises, they immediately revolted to the other side. The provinces did not embark, in the quarrel, with any greater sincerity, for it was of little consequence to them, whether the senate or the people prevailed; and therefore, when one of the generals lost the day, they declared for the other; for every city was obliged to justify itself before the conqueror, who having engaged himself to the soldiery, by immense promises, was constrained to sacrifice, to their avidity, those countries which were most obnoxious.

We have been afflicted, in France, with two sorts of civil war; one had religion for its pretext, and was of long duration, because the motive which first inflamed it continued to subsist after victory; the other could not properly be said to have any motive, but was rather kindled by the caprice, or ambition of some great men, and was soon extinguished.

Augustus (for that was the name offered by flattery to Octavius) was careful to establish



blish order, or rather a durable servitude ; for when once the sovereignty has been usurped in a free state, every transaction, on which an unlimited authority can be founded, is called a regulation ; and all instances of disorder, commotion, and bad government, are represented as the only expedients to preserve the just liberty of the subject.

All the Roman citizens who were ever actuated by ambitious views, have attempted to introduce a kind of anarchy in the republic, and Pompey, Crassus, and Cæsar succeeded to a miracle ; they authorized an impunity for all public crimes, and abolished every institution calculated to prevent the corruption of manners, and every regulation accommodated to the best politics ; and as good legislators endeavour to improve their fellow citizens, these, on the contrary, were indefatigable to lead them into a degeneracy from every virtue. With this view they gave a sanction to the pernicious custom of corrupting the people by money, and when any persons were accused of undue practices for obtaining places of trust, the delinquents corrupted the judges who were to decide the cause. They interrupted the elections by every violent proceeding, and even intimidated the tribunal itself. The authority of the people was reduced to annihilation,  
witness



witness Gabinius, \* who, after he had reinstated Ptolemy by force of arms, on his throne, contrary to the inclinations of the people, very coldly demanded a triumph.

These leading men in the republic, endeavoured to make the people disgusted at their own power, and to become necessary themselves, by rendering the inconveniences of a republican government as disagreeable as possible. But when Augustus had established himself in the supremacy, his politics were employed to restore order, that the people might be sensible of the happiness of being ruled by one man.

When Augustus was at the head of an armed power, he dreaded the revolt of his soldiers and not the conspiracies of the citizens; for which reason he lavished all his caresses on the former, and was altogether inhuman to the latter: But when his arms had accomplished a peace, he was apprehensive of conspiracies, and the idea of Cæsar's untimely death being always present to his remembrance, he resolved to vary from his conduct that he might avoid his fate. We shall now give the reader a complete key to the whole life of Augustus: He wore a coat of mail, under his robe, in the senate house; he refused the title of dictator; and

\* Cæsar made war with the Gauls, and Crassus with the Parthians, without any previous deliberation of the senate, or any decree of the people. Dion.

whereas

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whereas Cæsar insolently affirmed the republic to be nothing, and that his word alone were the laws, Augustus was perpetually expatiating on the dignity of the senate and his veneration for the republic. He was solicitous therefore to establish such a form of government as should be most satisfactory, without incommoding his particular interest, and changing it into an aristocracy with relation to the civil, and into a monarchy with respect to the military administration; rendering it by these means, an ambiguous system of government, which, being unsupported by its own power, could subsist no longer than the sovereign pleased, and consequently was a monarchy in all its circumstances.

A question has been started, whether Augustus had a real inclination to divest himself of the empire. But is it not apparent, that, had he been in earnest, he might easily have effected his design? But his whole proceeding, in that affair, was a mere artifice; because, tho' he expressed a desire every ten years, to be eased of the mighty load that encumbered him, yet he always thought fit bear in. These were little refinements of low cunning, calculated to induce the people to give him what, in his opinion, he had not sufficiently acquired. I form my thoughts in this particular, by the whole life of Augustus; and though mankind

kind are frequently fanciful and inconsistent, they are seldom known to renounce, in one moment, any enjoyment that has engaged the attention of all their life. Every action of Augustus, and each of his various regulations visibly tended to the establishment of monarchy. Sylla resigned the dictatorship, but amidst all his violent proceedings, a republican spirit is apparent in every part of his conduct; all his regulations, tho' executed with a tyrannical air, had an aspect to some certain form of a commonwealth. Sylla, who was a man of an impetuous temper, precipitated the Romans into liberty. Augustus, who was a smooth and subtle tyrant<sup>b</sup>, led them gently into slavery. When the republic regained its power, under Sylla, all the people exclaimed against tyranny; and whilst this became fortified, under Augustus, liberty was the general boast.

The custom of triumphs, which had so much contributed to the greatness of Rome, was abolished by Augustus, or, more properly, this honour became the prerogative

<sup>b</sup> I use this word in the sense of the Greeks and Romans, who gave this name to all those who had subverted a democracy, for in all other particulars, Augustus was a lawful prince, after the law enacted by the people: *Lege regia, quæ de ejus imperio lata est, Populus ei & in eum omne imperium transtulit.* Instit. lib. i.

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of sovereignty<sup>i</sup>. The greatest part of those customs which prevailed under the emperors, derived their origin from the republic<sup>k</sup>; and it will be proper to bring them together, that the similitude may be more apparent. That person alone under whose auspices a war had been conducted, was intitled to demand a triumph<sup>l</sup>: Now wars were always carried on under the auspices of the generalissimo, and consequently of the emperor, who was the generalissimo of all the forces.

As constant war was the reigning principle of the republic, the maxim under the emperors was altogether pacific. Victories were considered as so many opportunities of introducing disorder by armies, who might fix too great a valuation on their services. Those who were advanced to any

<sup>i</sup> Triumphal ornaments were all the honours now granted to any particular general. Dion. in Aug.

<sup>k</sup> The Romans having changed their government, without sustaining any invasion from an enemy, the same customs continued as were practised before the alteration of the government, the form of which still remained though the essentials were destroyed.

<sup>l</sup> Dion in Aug. l. 54. acquaints us that Agrippa neglected, out of modesty, to give the senate an account of his expedition against the people of the Bosphorus, and even refused a triumph; since which time, it was not granted to any person of his class; but it was a favour Augustus intended to afford Agrippa, though Antony would not allow it to Ventidius, the first time he conquered the Parthians.

command



command were apprehensive of engaging in enterprises of too great importance; they found it necessary to aim at glory with moderation, and were to engage the emperor's notice, and not raise his jealousy; in a word, they were not to appear before him with a lustre, which his eyes could not bear.

Augustus was very cautious <sup>m</sup> of investing any one with the rights of a Roman citizen; he made laws <sup>n</sup> to prevent the enfranchisement of too many slaves <sup>o</sup>, and by his will recommended the observation of these two maxims, with a dissuasive against extending the empire by new wars.

These three particulars were very well connected; for when all war was discontinued, there was no need either of new citizens or enfranchisements.

When Rome was in a constant state of war, she was under a perpetual necessity of recruiting her inhabitants. At the beginning, part of the people were transplanted thither from the conquered cities, and in process of time several citizens of the neighbouring towns came to Rome to obtain a share in the rights of suffrage, and established themselves there in such numbers, that upon the complaints of the allies, the Romans

<sup>m</sup> Sueton. in August.

<sup>n</sup> Justin. Institut. l. i. & Suet. in Aug.

<sup>o</sup> Dio in Aug.



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were obliged to remand them back. Multitudes at last arrived from the provinces; the laws favoured marriages, and even rendered them necessary. Rome, in all her wars, gained a prodigious number of slaves, and when the riches of the citizens became immense, they bought these unhappy people from all parts, and, from a principle of generosity, avarice or ambition, enfranchised them without number <sup>P</sup>. Some intended by this proceeding to reward the fidelity of their slaves, others had a view by it to receive, in their name, the corn which the republic distributed among the poor citizens. In a word, others desired to have their funeral solemnity graced with a long train of attendance crowned with flowers. The people were generally composed of persons who had received their freedom, so that the lords of the universe, not only in their original, but through the greatest part of succeeding times, were of servile extraction.

The number of the populace being chiefly collected out of slaves, who had been enfranchised, or the sons of such, became very incommodious, and were therefore transplanted in colonies; by which means the state effectually secured the obedience of the provinces. There was a general circulation of mankind, through the world.

<sup>P</sup> Dionys. Halicarnass. l. iv.

Rome received them in the state of slaves, and sent them away Romans.

Augustus, under the pretence of some tumults in the elections, placed a garrison and a governor in the city, made the legions perpetual, stationed them upon the frontiers, and established particular funds for their pay. To which we may add, that he gave orders for the veterans to receive their donations in money<sup>q</sup>, and not in lands.

Many unhappy consequences resulted from the distribution of land after the time of Sylla. The citizens property in their estates grew precarious, and if all the soldiers of one cohort were not settled in the same place, they became dissatisfied with their allotments, neglected the cultivation of their lands, and degenerated into dangerous citizens: But if they were distributed in entire legions, the ambitious could raise armies against the republic in a moment.

Augustus likewise established fixed provisions for the naval power, which was never done before his time; for as the Romans were masters of the Mediterranean, and as all navigation was then confined to that sea, they had not any enemy to fear.

<sup>q</sup> He ordered that the prætorian soldiers should have five thousand drachmas a piece after sixteen years service, and the others three thousand drachmas after twenty years. Dion. in Aug.

Dion observes, very judiciously, that after the emperors had assumed the sovereign power, it became very difficult to write the history of those times. All transactions were industriously concealed, the dispatches from the provinces were transmitted to the cabinets of the emperors, and we know little more than what either the folly or rashness of tyrants divulged, or such events as fall within the conjectures of historians.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## T I B E R I U S.

**A**S a river, sometimes, with a slow and silent progress, undermines the banks that have been thrown up to restrain its current, and at last overwhelms them in a moment, and sheds an inundation over the fields they formerly preserved; in the same manner, the supreme authority, which gained an insensible growth under Augustus, bore down all before it in the succeeding reign of Tiberius.

A law at that time subsisted, which made it treason to form any injurious attempt against the majesty of the people: Tiberius assumed to himself the interpretation and enforcement of this law, and extended it not only to the cases for which it was originally calculated, but to every con-

juncture that could possibly be favourable to his hatred or suspicions. And now, not only actions, but words and signs, and even thoughts were adjudged by this standard; for those expressions which drop from the overflowing of the heart, in the conversation of intimate friends, are always supposed to be their real sentiments. All freedom was therefore banished from their feasts, diffidence reigned among relations, there was no fidelity among the slaves: The gloomy disposition and insincerity of the prince were diffused through all ranks of men; friendship had the disrepute of a dangerous quicksand; a fine genius passed for a shining indiscretion, and virtue itself was only considered as an affectation, which officiously reminded the people of their lost happiness.

No tyranny can have a severer effect than that which is exercised under the appearance of laws, and with the plausible colours of justice; when the executors of cruel power would, if we may use the expression, drown the unhappy wretches on the very plank that before saved them amidst the troubled waves.

As a tyrant is never destitute of instruments to accomplish his designs, so Tiberius always found the senate tractable enough to condemn<sup>r</sup> as many persons as he could

<sup>r</sup> Before the time of the emperors, the senate confined their attention to public affairs, and never decided the causes of private persons in a full body.



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possibly suspect; and this venerable body sunk at last into a degeneracy too low to be described. The senators even courted servitude, to gain the favour of Sejanus; and the most illustrious among them abandoned themselves to the dishonourable profession of informers.

It seems easy to discover several causes of that slavish disposition, which then prevailed in the senate. When Cæsar had entirely crushed the party who declared for the republic, all the friends, as well as enemies he then had in the senate, concurred with equal unanimity, to remove the bounds with which the laws had limited his power, and at the same time they agreed to render him unparalleled honours; some came into these compliances with a view to please him, others intended by such means to make him odious. Dion informs us, that some even proposed that he might have the liberty to enjoy as many women as he should desire. This obsequious conduct freed him from all suspicions of the senate, and consequently was the cause of his assassination; but then it prevented in the succeeding reigns, all flattery from rising to such wild and unexampled heights as might have created disaffection in the minds of the people.

Before Rome submitted to the dominion of one man, the riches of the nobility, in



what manner soever acquired, were certainly immense, but those grandees were divested of the greatest part of their treasures by the emperors <sup>f</sup>. The senators were no longer resorted to by those great and wealthy clients, who were the sources of their patrons' affluence. The provinces produced nothing considerable, except for Cæsar; and especially when they were under the government of his præfects, whose office had some resemblance to that of the intendants in France. However, though the fountain from whence all this opulence flowed was at last exhausted, the expences were continued in their former profusion, and the track being once marked out, the men of rank could only pursue it now, by the emperor's favour.

Augustus had deprived the people of their legislative capacity, and abolished all their jurisdiction with respect to public offences, but he still left them the power of electing magistrates. Tiberius, who dreaded the assemblies of a people so numerous, divested them even of this privilege, and transferred it to the senate <sup>t</sup>, or rather to himself. Now

<sup>f</sup> The great men were impoverished even in the time of Augustus, and no longer solicited for the office of ædile or tribune of the people, and many of them had not any inclination to have a seat among the senators.

<sup>t</sup> Tacit. Annal. l. i. Dion l. liv. They were afterwards re-established, and then disannulled by Caligula.

it is impossible to conceive the abject low-ness to which the declension of the people's power sunk the spirits of the grandees : When dignities were in the disposal of the populace, the magistrates, who solicited their interest, practised a number of mean condescensions ; but these were intermixed with a certain magnificence that in some measure concealed them : For instance, they exhibited pompous games and recreations, they distributed sums of money, and quantities of corn among the people, and sometimes regaled them with splendid feasts. But though the motive was low, the manner seemed august, because it always comports with a great man to obtain the favour of the people by liberality ; but when that people had nothing to bestow, and the prince, in the name of the senate, disposed of all employments, they were desired as well as obtained in a dishonourable manner, and could only be compassed by adulation, infamy and a hateful train of crimes, that were made necessary arts by the iniquity of the age.

It does not indeed appear that Tiberius had any intention to make the senate contemptible, and he complained of nothing so much, as the propensity of that body to slavery. His life was filled with dissatisfactions on that account, but he resembled the generality of mankind, and was fond of

contradictory enjoyments. His general politics were inconsistent with his particular passions; he would willingly have seen a free senate, who by their conduct might have created a veneration for his government; but then he was also desirous of a senate who would every moment be tractable to his fears, his jealousies, and his aversions. In a word, the politician was perpetually subordinate to the man.

We have already intimated, that the people had formerly obtained from the patricians the privilege of electing, from their own body, a set of magistrates, who were to protect them from the insults and injustice that might be intended against them; and, in order to capacitate those magistrates for the exercise of such a power, their persons were declared sacred and inviolable, and whoever should presume to treat a tribune injuriously, either by actions or language, was condemned by the law to suffer death on the spot. Now when the emperors were invested with the tribunitial power, they obtained the same prerogatives, and it was upon this principle that such a number of people were deprived of their lives: From this source flowed the impunity with which informers flourished in their profession<sup>v</sup>; and

[<sup>v</sup> Under the reign of Tiberius, statues were erected to, and triumphant ornaments conferred on informers,

hence

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hence it was, that the accusation of treason, that crime, says Pliny, which was charged on those to whom no real offence could be imputed, was at last extended to any one whom the wantonness of tyranny pointed out.

I am inclinable however to believe, that some of those titles of accusation were not so ridiculous as they appear at present, and can never be persuaded that Tiberius would have caused a man to be accused for selling to one who bought his house, a statue of the emperor; that Domitian should condemn a woman to die for undressing herself before his image; or that he should proceed with the same severity against a citizen of Rome, for causing a description of all the earth to be delineated on the walls of his apartment; if such actions as these had not called up an idea in the minds of the Romans very different from that they now excite in us. For my part I am of opinion, that as Rome had changed the form of its government, those actions which now appear inconsiderable to us, might, when they were committed, have a very different aspect; and I judge in this manner, from my reflection on what is now customary in a nation which cannot with any justice be

which debased these honours to such a degree that those who had merited them, disdained to accept of them  
Fragm. of Dio l. 58. L'Esprit des Loix, l. viii. c. 7.]



suspected of tyranny, and yet it is a capital crime there to drink to the health of a certain person.

I cannot omit any circumstance which tends to give a clear representation of the Roman genius. That people were so habituated to obedience, and so constantly placed their happiness in homaging their masters, that after the death of Germanicus, they were affected with such inconsolable sorrow and despair, as never appears in our contemporaries. The descriptions given by historians <sup>w</sup> of a desolation, so public, so universal and immoderate, deserve a reader's curiosity; and it is certain, that this scene of grief was not affected, since a whole people are never known to practise so much flattery and dissimulation.

The Romans, who had now no longer any share in the government, and were chiefly composed of persons who had received their freedom, or such indolent and unindustrious people who lived at the expence of the public treasure; were now sensible of nothing but their imbecillity, and afflicted themselves like children or women, who from a principle of weakness abandon themselves to sorrow. These people were politically indisposed, they placed all their fears and hopes in the person of

<sup>w</sup> See Tacitus.



Germanicus, and when he was snatched from them by an untimely death, they sunk into despair.

No people are so apprehensive of calamity as those whom the misery of their condition should rather discharge from all fear, and who ought to say with Andromache, *Would to heaven I had any enjoyment I could dread to lose!* There are at this day, in Naples, fifty thousand men, who have no food but herbs, and whose whole cloathing consists of a few miserable rags; and yet these people, who are the most wretched creatures upon earth, discover a dreadful consternation at the least irruption of Vesuvius, and are so infatuated as to fear they shall be miserable.

## CHAPTER. XVII.

*Remarks on the Emperors from Caius Caligula to Antoninus.*

**C**Aligula succeeded Tiberius, and it was said of him, that there never was a better slave, nor a worse master: And indeed these two circumstances are very consistent; for the same turn of mind which inclines a person to be strongly affected at unlimited power in his sovereign, makes him to be no less in love with it, when he rises to empire himself.

Caligula restored the assemblies of the people, which Tiberius had prohibited ; and abolished the arbitrary law and constructions of treason established by that emperor : From which proceeding we may observe, that the beginnings of a bad reign sometimes resemble the conclusion of a good one ; for a wicked prince may, from a principle of contradiction to the motives of his predecessor's conduct, be spirited to actions which the other performed from a virtuous inducement ; and we owe to this very principle a number of good as well as bad regulations.

But what did the Romans gain by these plausible beginnings ? Caligula disannulled the law which constituted the circumstances of treason, but then he destroyed those who displeased him, by a military severity ; and his vengeance, instead of pointing at some particular senators, hung over all their heads, like a sword that threatened them with extermination at one blow.

This formidable tyranny of the emperors arose from the disposition of the Romans in general ; who, as they were suddenly enslaved to an arbitrary government, and were hardly sensible of any interval between dominion and subjection, were not prepared for such a transition by any gentle softening. The fierce and untractable disposition still remained, and the citizens were  
used

used in the same manner they themselves had treated their conquered enemies, and were governed altogether upon the same plan. When Sylla made his public entrance into Rome, he was still the Sylla who had done the same in Athens, and he governed with an uniform imperiousness. As to us who are natives of France, and have sunk into subjection, by insensible degrees, if we are destitute of laws, we are at least governed by engaging manners.

The constant view of the combats of gladiators inspired the Romans with extraordinary fierceness; and it was observable, that Claudius became more disposed to shed blood, by being habituated to those spectacles. The example of this emperor, who was naturally of a gentle disposition, and yet degenerated into so much cruelty at last, makes it evident, that the education in those times, was very different from our own.

The Romans, being accustomed to tyrannize over human nature, \* in the persons of their children and slaves, had a very imperfect idea of that virtue we distinguish by the name of humanity. Whence proceeds the savage cast of mind so remarkable in the inhabitants of our colonies, but from their

\* See the institutes of Justinian, where they treat of the power of parents and masters.

constant severity to an unfortunate class of mankind? When barbarity prevails in civil government, what natural justice or harmony of manners can be expected from the individuals?

We are fatigued and satiated with seeing in the history of the emperors such an infinite number of people whom they destroyed for no other end than to confiscate their goods: Our modern accounts furnish us with no such instances of inhumanity. This difference, as we have already intimated, is to be ascribed to the milder cast of our manners, and the civilizing restraints of a more amiable religion. We may likewise add, that we have no opportunity of pillaging the families of senators who have ravaged the world, and we derive this advantage from the mediocrity of our fortunes, which are consequently in a safer situation. In a word, we are not considerable enough to be plundered *y*.

That class of the Roman people who were called Plebeians had no aversion to the worst of their emperors; for since they had no longer any share of empire themselves, nor were any more employed in wars, they became the most contemptible and degene-

*y* The duke of Braganza had an immense estate in Portugal; and when he first revolted, the king of Spain was congratulated by his nobility, for the rich confiscation he was to derive from that event.

rate



rate people in the world; they looked upon commerce and the sciences as only proper for slaves, and the distributions of corn which they received, made them neglect the cultivation of their lands: They had been familiarized to public games and splendid spectacles, and since they had no longer any tribunes to obey, or magistrates to elect, those gratifications which they were only permitted to enjoy, became necessary to them, and their indolence and inactivity stimulated their relish of those indulgencies.

Caligula, Nero, Commodus, Caracalla, were lamented by the people for their very folly, for whatever these loved, the others were as madly fond of, in their turn, and not only contributed their whole power, but even devoted their own persons to those pleasures; they lavished all the riches of the empire with the greatest prodigality, and when these were exhausted, the people without the least emotion, beheld all the great families pillaged. They enjoyed the fruits of tyranny, without the least intermixture of uneasiness, because their low obscurity was their protection. Such princes have a natural antipathy to people of merit and virtue, because they are sensible their actions are disapproved by such persons. The contradiction<sup>z</sup> and even the silence of

<sup>z</sup> As the ancient austerity of manners could not suffer the licentiousness of theatrical representations, the  
an

an austere citizen were insupportable to them; and as they grew intoxicated with popular applause, they at last imagined their government constituted the public felicity, and consequently that it could be censured by none but disaffected and ill-disposed persons.

When an emperor at any time discovered his strength and activity, as when Commodus<sup>a</sup> for instance, in the presence of a vast assembly of the people, slew several wild beasts with a facility peculiar to him, he naturally raised the administration of the soldiers as well as the populace, because strength and pliancy of limbs were at that time considered as necessary qualifications in the military art.

We have no longer a just idea of bodily exercises, and a man who practises them

minds of virtuous men continued to be filled with contempt for those who exercised that profession.

<sup>a</sup> Though the gladiators were selected from the dregs of the people, and followed the most infamous profession that was ever tolerated; for none but slaves or malefactors were compelled to devote themselves to death in combats at the funerals of the grandees; yet the fondness of the people for these exercises which had such a resemblance to those of war, became so immoderate, that we cannot help calling it a species of madness. Emperors, senators, men of distinguished birth, and even women appeared upon the arena in the amphitheatre; nec virorum modo pugnas, sed & sceminarum, says Suetonius in the life of Domitian. The Romans were as much delighted too with wrestlers.

with

with any extraordinary application, appears contemptible in our opinion, because the generality of these exercises produce nothing more than a little exterior agreeableness; whereas among the ancients, all their exercises, even dancing itself, became incorporated into their martial discipline.

We may likewise add, that, even among us, an affected mastership in the weapons we employ in war, is considered as a ridiculous attainment, because since the custom of duelling became so prevailing, fencing has been treated as the science of boisterous wranglers or bullies.

Those who censure Homer, for his usual manner of celebrating the strength or activity of his Heroes, must likewise think Sallust<sup>b</sup> very ridiculous when he praises Pompey, for running, leaping, and carrying a burden better than any other man.

Caligula, was a true sophist in cruelty, for as he equally descended from Antony and Augustus, he declared he would punish the consuls if they celebrated the day appointed to commemorate the victory at Actium, and that they should likewise feel his severity if they neglected to honour that event; and Drusilla to whom he accorded

<sup>b</sup> Cum alacribus saltu, cum velocibus cursu, cum validis recte certabat. Fragm. of Sallust cited by Vegetius l. i. c. x.

divine honours, being dead, it was a crime to bewail her because she was a goddess, and as great an offence to forbear that sorrow because she was his sister.

We have now ascended an eminence from whence we may take a view of human affairs: When we trace in the Roman history, such a variety of wars, and their prodigal effusion of human blood; when we view so many once flourishing nations depopulated, and see such a diversity of shining actions and triumphant processions; when we trace the masterly strokes of politics, sagacity, and fortitude, so conspicuous in that people, and reflect on their advances to universal monarchy by schemes so judiciously concerted, so successfully supported, and so happily accomplished; to what view are all these mighty preparations directed? Why truly to satiate the ambition of five or six monsters! Is it possible then, that the senate could divest so many kings of their power, only to plunge themselves into the most abject slavery to one of their unworthy citizens, and to exterminate itself by its own edicts? Did it rise to such a height of grandeur, to drop more splendidly into ruin, and do the sons of men only labour to augment their power, that they may fall, by their own combinations, into better hands?

When Caligula was assassinated, the senate assembled to form a new model of government,



ment, and, whilst they were engaged in such deliberations, a party of soldiers rushed in to plunder the palace, and found, in some obscure place, a man trembling with fear; this man was Claudius, and they immediately saluted him emperor.

Claudius completed the subversion of the ancient form of government, by intrusting the dispensation of justice to his officers: The principal motive to the wars of Marius and Sylla, was to determine the competition of the senators and the equestrian order for this prerogative, and it was now wrested from both parties by the arbitrary fancy of a weak man. Surprising event indeed, of a dispute which had set the world in flames!

When the reign of a prince succeeds the dissolution of a republic, no authority can be more absolute than his own, for he then possesses all that power which before was distributed among the people, who exercised it without any limitations; and for this reason the kings of Denmark are the most despotic sovereigns in Europe.

The people were altogether as abject and unmanly as the senate, though they once were animated with such a martial spirit, that, when armies were levied in the city, before the time of the emperors, they gained

\* See Tacitus.

the military discipline upon the spot, and immediately marched to the enemy. In the civil wars of Vitellius and Vespasian, Rome became a prey to the ambitious, and was full of timorous citizens, who were struck with consternation by any party of soldiers, who could first approach them.

The emperors themselves were in no better a situation; for as the right of electing a sovereign was not appropriated to any single army, it generally happened, that, when an emperor was chosen by one body of soldiers, that circumstance alone was sufficient to discredit him with the others, who immediately set up a competitor to oppose him.

As the grandeur therefore of the republic proved fatal to that form of government, so the mighty extent of the empire was altogether as pernicious to the monarchs. If the territories they were to defend had been confined to moderate limits, those sovereigns might have been effectually served by one principal army; and the soldiers, when they had once elected their emperor, would have been dutiful enough to acquiesce in their choice.

Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, <sup>d</sup> made a very transient appearance in the imperial scene.

<sup>d</sup> Suscepere duo manipulares imperium populi Romani transferendum, & transfulerunt. Tacit. l. i.

DECLENSION of *the* ROMANS. 213

Vespasian, who, like them, was elected by the army, devoted all his reign to the re-establishment of the empire, which had been successively possessed by six tyrants, all equally cruel, and most of them exceedingly furious and untractable, generally very weak, and, to complete the public calamity, profuse even to infatuation.

Titus, who succeeded his father, was the darling of the people; but Domitian presented to their view an uncommon monster more inhuman in his disposition, or at least more implacable, than any of his predecessors, because he was more timorous.

His favourite freemen, and, according to some historians, the empress her self, finding his friendship as dangerous as his aversion, and that he allowed no bounds to his suspicions and accusations, turned their thoughts to a successor, and chose the venerable Nerva.

Nerva adopted Trajan, who proved the most accomplished prince in all history; it was a happiness to be born under his reign, which blessed the empire with more prosperity and true glory than it had ever enjoyed before. He was an admirable statesman, and a most accomplished general; the native sweetness of his disposition inclined him to universal humanity; and his unclouded penetration, guided him through the best and purest tracts of government,

ment; he was actuated by a noble soul, to whose embellishment every virtue had contributed; his conduct was free from all extremes, and his amiable qualities were tempered with that exact proportion that the brightness of one was never lost in the lustre of another. To sum up all, he was the best qualified of mankind, to do honour to human nature, and to represent the divinity on earth.

He accomplished Cæsar's project of invading the Parthians, and was very successful in his wars with that mighty people; any monarch but himself would have sunk under the weight of such an enterprize, where danger was always present, and from whence the source of his necessary supplies was at a vast distance; in a word, where he could not be sure victory itself would save him from destruction.

The difficulty consisted in the situation of the two empires, and the military discipline of both nations. If he directed his march through Armenia towards the sources of Tygris and Euphrates, he was sure to be incommoded with a mountainous and impracticable country, through which no convoy of provision could pass, so that the army would be half destroyed before they could penetrate into Media<sup>e</sup>. On the other

<sup>e</sup> The country did not produce any trees large enough to be wrought into engines proper for the siege of towns. Plut. life of Antoninus.

hand,



hand, if he should strike out a lower track towards the south, through Nisibis, he would find himself bewildered in a ghastly desert that separated the two empires; and if he intended to proceed still lower and march through Mesopotamia, he was then to cross a large country that was either uncultivated or laid under water; and as the Tygris and Euphrates flowed from north to south, he could not gain a passage into the country without quitting those rivers, which if he did he must inevitably perish.

As to the manner practised by the two nations in making war, the strength of the Romans consisted in their infantry, which was the most firm and best disciplined body of soldiers in the world.

The Parthians on the contrary, had no infantry, but then their horse were admirable, and always combated at such a distance as placed them out of the reach of the Roman army, and the javelin was seldom launched far enough to wound them. Their own weapons consisted of a bow, and many formidable shafts, and they rather besieged an army than gave it battle; they were pursued to no purpose in their flight, for that was the same with them as an engagement. They carried off all the inhabitants of the country, and only left garrisons in their fortified places; and when these were taken, the conquerors were obliged

liged to destroy them. The Parthians likewise set fire to all the country that lay round the Roman army, and did not leave them the least blade of herbage. In a word, they managed their wars in a manner very like that which is now practised on the same frontiers.

We may add to these disadvantages, that the Illyrian and German legions which were drawn out for this war, were no way capable to sustain it, <sup>f</sup> because the soldiers, who were accustomed to plentiful food in their own country, perished in these regions for want of many necessaries.

The Parthians by these means had accomplished that, for the preservation of their liberty, which had hitherto been impracticable to all other nations, against the victorious power of the Romans: But they owed this advantage not to any resistless valour, but to their inaccessible situation.

ADRIAN gave up the conquest of TRAJAN, and made Euphrates the boundary of his empire; and indeed it was surprizing that the Romans after such a series of war should lose nothing but what they were desirous to quit; and thus they resembled the ocean, whose expansion is never lessened but when it retires of itself.

This conduct of ADRIAN occasioned great dissatisfactions among the people. It

<sup>f</sup> See Herodian's life of Alexander.

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was recorded in the sacred book of that nation<sup>s</sup> that when Tarquin intended to build the capitol, he found the place most commodious for his purpose filled with the statues of other deities, upon which he employed his skill in augury to discover if they were inclinable to resign their places to Jupiter, and they all consented, except Mars, Hebe, and Terminus. This proceeding gave birth to three religious opinions, namely, that Mars would never resign his place to any other being; that the Roman youth would be always invincible; and that their god Terminus would never recede from his station; the contrary of which was however verified in the reign of Adrian.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Considerations on the State of the Empire from  
ANTONINUS to PROBUS.*

**I**N this period the Stoics propagated their doctrines in the empire with great popularity; and it seems as if nature herself had been industrious to produce this admirable sect which resembled those plants the earth causes to spring up in places never visited by the sunbeams.

This sect furnished the Romans with their best emperors; none but Marcus Aurelius

<sup>s</sup> Augustin. *de Civit. Dei*, l. iv. c. 23 & 29.

could extinguish the remembrance of the first Antonine who adopted him; and we find ourselves affected with a secret pleasure when we speak of this emperor. We cannot read his life without some impressions of tenderness, and grow inclinable to think better of ourselves, because the history of that prince makes us entertain a more favourable opinion of mankind.

The wisdom of NERVA, the glory of TRAJAN, the valour of ADRIAN, and the virtue of the two ANTONINES, gained them the veneration of the soldiers; but when a set of new monsters became their successors, the abuse of military government appeared in its full enormity; and the soldiers, who had exposed the empire to sale, assassinated the emperors for the sake of new gratuities.

It has been a conceived opinion that there is a certain prince in the world, who for the space of fifteen years has been endeavouring to abolish the civil government in his dominions, and to substitute the military in its room. I have no intention to make odious reflections on such a design, and shall only observe, that from the nature of things in general, two hundred guards may be a better security to a prince than four thousand; and besides, an armed people are of all others the most dangerous to be opposed.

COMMODOUS succeeded his father Marcus Aurelius, and was a monster who gave a  
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## DECLENSION of *the* ROMANS. 219

loose to all his own passions, and those of his courtiers. The persons who delivered the world from such a barbarian, transferred the imperial dignity to the venerable Pertinax, who was soon assassinated by the pretorian bands.

The empire was then exposed to auction, and Didius Julian carried it by a number of magnificent promises. This proceeding exasperated the whole body of the people; for though the empire had been frequently bought, it had never been sold upon credit before. Pescennius Niger, Severus, and Albinus, were saluted emperors, and Julian not being in a condition to pay the immense sums he had promised, was abandoned by the soldiers.

Severus defeated Niger and Albinus: He was master of extraordinary qualities, but wanted that sweetness of disposition, which in princes is the most amiable quality they can possess.

The power of the emperors might easily appear more tyrannical than that of modern princes, for as their dignity was a conjunction of the various authorities in the Roman magistracy, such as dictators, for instance, tribunes of the people, proconsuls, censors, supreme pontiffs, and sometimes consuls, they frequently assumed the dispensation of distributive justice, and it was easy for them to create suspicions that they

had oppressed those whom they condemned; for the people usually judge of the abuse of power, by the greatness of its extent; whereas the kings of Europe, being legislators and not executors of the law, sovereign princes but not judges, are consequently discharged from the exercise of an authority that might prove odious; and have consigned the infliction of punishments to magistrates, whilst they reserved to themselves the distribution of pardons and other popular acts of mercy.

The unhappy custom of proscribing, introduced by Sylla, was still practised under the emperors; and the prince must have been distinguished by some virtue, if he discountenanced that severe proceeding; for as the ministers and favourites turned their thoughts to confiscations at the beginning of a reign, they were always representing to their sovereign the necessity of punishments, and the dangerous effects of clemency.

Few emperors have ever been more jealous of their authority than Tiberius and Severus, and yet they suffered themselves to be governed in a most dishonourable manner, the one by Sejanus and the other by Plautian.

When Severus gave full play to his proscriptions, a great body of Niger's <sup>h</sup> ar-

<sup>h</sup> Herodian's life of Severus.

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my retired for safety to the Parthians <sup>i</sup> and perfected them in every part of military discipline wherein they were any way defective; they habituated them to the Roman weapons, and even taught their workmen how to make that martial equipage; in consequence of which, that people, who till then had usually limited their exploits to defensive wars <sup>k</sup>, were generally aggressors for the future.

It is very remarkable, that in the long series of those civil wars that were continually raging, the chiefs, who were supported by the legions of Europe, generally defeated the leaders of the Asiatic legions <sup>l</sup>; and we read, in the history of Severus, that he could not take the city of Atra in Arabia, because the European legions having mutinied, he was obliged to employ those of Syria.

<sup>i</sup> This fatality continued in the reign of Alexander. Artaxerxes, who re-established the Persian empire, made it formidable to the Romans, because their soldiers either through caprice or a libertine disposition deserted in great multitudes to the king of Persia.

<sup>k</sup> Namely the Persians, who followed their example.

<sup>l</sup> Severus defeated the Asiatic legions of Niger, Constantine those of Licinius: Vespasian, though proclaimed by the armies of Syria, made war against Vitellius only with the legions of Mœsia, Pannonia, and Dalmatia. Cicero, when he was at his province, wrote to the senate, that they should not reckon on the levies raised in this country. Constantine defeated Maxentius, saies Zozimen, by his cavalry only. See hereafter chap. xxvi.

This difference became evident, when the levies were first made <sup>m</sup> in the provinces, and it appeared as considerable in the legions, as it did in the nations out of which they were raised, and who by nature or education were more or less formed for war.

Another unhappy consequence likewise ensued from these provincial levies, for the emperors, who were generally elected out of the soldiery, were for the most part strangers, and sometimes the worst of Barbarians. Rome was now no longer mistress of the world, but received laws from the whole universe.

Each emperor brought with him some peculiarity from his own country, relating to fashions, manners, politics, or religion; and Heliogabalus had even formed a resolution to destroy every object of religious veneration in Rome, and to banish all the gods from their temples, that he might place his own in their room.

This circumstance, even considered as independent on the secret operations of the Deity, which are obvious to his omniscience alone, greatly contributed to the establishment of Christianity; for nothing was now strange in the empire, and the people were

<sup>m</sup> Augustus fixed the legions to particular stations in the provinces. The levies were originally raised at Rome, after that among the Latins, in Italy next, and last of all in the provinces.



## DECLENSION of *the* ROMANS. 223

prepared to relish every new custom which the emperors were inclinable to introduce.

It is well known, that the Romans received the gods of other nations into their city; but then they received them with the air of conquerors, and carried them in their triumphal processions: But when strangers attempted to establish them by their own authority, they were immediately rejected. It is likewise notorious, that the Romans gave foreign deities the names of such of their own gods as were most conformable to the others, in their attributes: But when the priests of other countries would introduce the adoration of their divinities, under their proper names, among the Romans, they were not permitted to accomplish that design; and this was the greatest obstacle to the progress of Christianity.

CARACALLA, who succeeded Severus, may be called not only a tyrant, but the destroyer of mankind: Caligula, Nero and Domitian limited their barbarities to Rome; but this monster endeavoured to extend his fury thro' the world like a pestilence.

Severus amassed prodigious treasures by the exactions of a long reign, and his proscriptions of those who declared for his competitors in the empire.

Caracalla having commenced his reign with murdering his brother Geta with his own hands, purchased with those riches a

connivance at his crime, from the soldiers who had an extraordinary regard for Geta ; but the liberalities of Caracalla had such an effect upon them, that they declared they had taken oaths to both the children of Severus, and not to one alone.

The immoderate treasures which have been gathered by princes have commonly produced fatal effects : They generally corrupt the successor, who grows dazzled with the lustre they diffuse ; and if they happen not to prevent his heart, they misguide his mind, and cause him to form plans of mighty enterprizes, by the ministration of a power that is only accidental, always transitory and unnatural, and an empty inflation instead of a real grandeur.

Caracalla augmented the soldiers pay ; Macrinus wrote to the Senate, that this augmentation amounted to <sup>n</sup> seventy millions of drachms°. This prince seems to have magnified things ; and if we compare our soldiers pay now-a-days with the rest of our public expences, and suppose that they kept the same proportion among the Romans, we shall see that this sum was excessive.

Here we should enquire what was a Roman soldier's pay. We learn from Orosius,

<sup>n</sup> Seven thousand myriads. Dion. in *Macrinus*.

° The Attic drachm was the same with the Roman denarius, the eighth part of an ounce, and the sixty-fourth part of our marc.

that

## DECLENSION of the ROMANS. 225

that Domitian raised <sup>p</sup> it a fourth from what it was before. And it appears from a soldier's speech in Tacitus, that <sup>q</sup> at the death of Augustus it was ten ounces of brass per day. We find in Suetonius <sup>r</sup>, that Julius Cæsar doubled the pay of his time. In Pliny <sup>s</sup>, that at the second Punic war, it was diminished one fifth. It was then in the first Punic war <sup>t</sup> about six ounces of copper; in the second <sup>v</sup>, about five ounces; at ten, under Julius Cæsar; and thirteen and a third, under Domitian <sup>w</sup>. I shall make here some reflexions.

The pay which the republic might easily advance, when it was only a small state, when it engaged in a new war every year, and re-

<sup>p</sup> He raised it in proportion as seventy-five is to an hundred.

<sup>q</sup> Annal. lib. i.

<sup>r</sup> Life of Jul. Cæs.

<sup>s</sup> Hist. Nat. xxxiii. 13. Instead of giving ten ounces of copper for twenty, they paid sixteen. [i. e. instead of ten *asses* of brass of two ounces each, they paid only xvi *asses* of one ounce each.]

<sup>t</sup> A soldier in the *Mostellaria* of Plautus, saies it was three asses; which can be understood only of asses of ten ounces. But if the pay was exactly six asses in the first Punic war, it was not diminished in the second a fifth, but a sixth, and the fraction was omitted.

<sup>v</sup> Polybius, who reduces the pay to Greek money, differs only by a fraction.

<sup>w</sup> See Orosius and Suetonius in *Domitian*. They say the same thing under different words. I have reduced the terms to ounces of brass, that I might be understood without having recourse to the several species of the Roman money.

ceived the spoils of it as often; it was not able to raise, without running in debt, under the first Punic war, when it carried its arms beyond Italy, when it maintained a long war, and supported great armies.

In the second Punic war the pay was reduced to five ounces of brass; and this diminution might be made without danger at a time when most of the citizens were ashamed to receive pay, and were willing to serve at their own charge.

The treasures of Persia \*, and of so many other kings, which flowed into Rome, put an end to taxes there. In such public and private opulence, they had the prudence not to enlarge the former payment of five ounces of brass.

Though even from this pay they made a deduction for corn, cloaths, and arms, still it was sufficient, because they enrolled only those citizens, who had patrimonies of their own.

Marius having enrolled people of no substance, and his example being afterwards followed, Julius Cæsar was obliged to augment the pay.

This augmentation having been continued after the Death of Cæsar, they were obliged, under the consulship of Hirtius and Pansa, to re-establish taxes.

\* Cic. Offic. lib. ii.



The weakness of Domitian adding one fourth to this pay, was a great blow to the State, the unhappiness of which was not that it brought in luxury in general, but infused it among people of that condition who ought to be supplied with no more than the bare necessities which nature requires. Lastly, by Carracalla's final augmentation, the empire was thrown into such a condition, that, not being able to subsist without soldiers, it could not subsist with them.

Caracalla, to soften the horror of his fratricide, instituted divine honours to his brother Geta; and, what was very peculiar, he himself received the same deification from MACRINUS, who after he had caused him to be stabbed, and was desirous of appeasing the prætorian bands, who regretted the death of a prince whose liberalities they had so often enjoyed, erected a temple, and established a priesthood of Flamins in his honour.

This preserved his memory from all degrading imputations, <sup>y</sup> and the senate not daring to censure him, he was not ranked among the tyrants, like Commodus, who had not done more to deserve that title than himself.

As to the two great emperors Adrian

<sup>y</sup> *Ælius Lampridius in Vita Alexandri Severi.*

and Severus<sup>2</sup>, one established and the other relaxed the military discipline, and the events exactly corresponded with their causes: The reigns which succeeded that of Adrian were a series of happiness and tranquillity; but after the death of Severus, nothing was seen but a succession of calamities and horror.

Caracalla had confined himself to no limitations in his prodigality to the Soldiers, and in that particular he acted conformably to the sentiments of his father, who, on his death-bed, advised him to enrich the army and disregard all the rest of mankind.

But these politics could be only accommodated to one reign; for the successor, being no longer able to continue those expences, was soon assassinated by the army: So that the emperors who were eminent for wisdom, were always murdered by the soldiers; and those, whose lives were infamous, were destroyed either by the conspiracies or edicts of the senate.

When a tyrant suffered himself to be entirely influenced by the army, and left the citizens exposed to their licentious depredations, such injurious proceedings could not be extended beyond the period of one reign; because the soldiers, in consequence of their

<sup>2</sup> See the abridgment of Xiphil. in the life of Adrian, and Herodian in the life of Severus.

devastations, impoverished the people, and defeated themselves of their pay by that event. It therefore became necessary to reform the military discipline, which was a project always fatal to the persons who presumed to attempt it.

When Caracalla lost his life by the treachery of Macrinus, the soldiers, in despair at the death of a prince whose liberality had been dispensed to them with an unlimited flow, elected HELIOGABALUS <sup>a</sup>, and when he, by his prostitution to infamous pleasures, and the lawless extravagances he suffered the army to commit, grew contemptible even in their eyes, they dispatched him by an assassination. The same fate attended ALEXANDER, who was preparing to restore the true military discipline, and threatened to punish the soldiers for their misconduct <sup>b</sup>.

In this manner a tyrant, who, instead of being sollicitous for his safety, affected an ability to be criminal, perished with the fatal advantage of being murdered a few days before another who would willingly have been a better man.

After the death of Alexander, the imperial dignity was transferred to MAXIMIN, who was the first emperor of Barbarian ex-

<sup>a</sup> At this time every one thought himself good enough to rise to empire. See Dial. lxxix.

<sup>b</sup> See Lampridius.

traction, and had been distinguished by his strength and gigantic stature.

This prince and his son were likewise slain by the soldiers. The two first GORDIANS perished in Africa: MAXIMUS, BALBINUS, and the third GORDIAN were massacred: PHILIP, who had caused the young Gordian to be destroyed, was himself slain with his son; and DECIUS, who was chosen to succeed him, was murdered in his turn by the treason of GALLUS <sup>c</sup>.

The Roman empire was improperly so denominated at that time, and might rather be called an irregular commonwealth, nearly resembling the Aristocracy of Algiers, where the militia, who are invested with the sovereign power, elect and depose the magistrate they call the Dey; and it may perhaps be taken for a general rule, that a military government is, in some respects, a republic rather than a monarchy.

<sup>c</sup> Casaubon observes, on the *Historia Augusta*, that during the period of 160 years which it comprehends, there were seventy persons, who justly or otherwise, had the title of Cæsar. Adeo erant in illo Principatu, quem tamen omnes mirantur, comitia Imperii semper incerta. So uncertain, to the astonishment of all, were the elections in that empire. Which circumstance sufficiently manifests the difference between the Roman government and that of France, where, for the long space of twelve hundred years, no more than sixty three kings have reigned.

But



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But least any one should imagine the soldiers had no other share in the government than what they extorted by their disobedience and insurrections, let it be asked whether the orations in which the emperors addressed themselves to the army, were not at last very correspondent to those which the consuls and tribunes formerly made to the people? And tho' the soldiers had no particular place to assemble in, nor were under the regulation of any certain forms; tho' the temper of their minds was not usually serene, their proceedings consisting of action rather than deliberation, did they not however dispose of the public fortune with a sovereign authority? What was an emperor but the minister of a violent and tumultuous government, and did not the soldiers elect him for their own particular convenience?

When the army associated into the empire<sup>d</sup>, Philip, the prætorian prefect of the third Gordian, this prince claimed the exercise of an undivided command, but did not succeed in his pretensions; he then requested the army to divide the power equally between them, but to as little effect; he next intreated them to leave him the title of Cæsar, and was still refused; he afterwards solicited them to create him prefect

<sup>d</sup> See Julius Capitolinus.

of the prætorian bands, and met with the usual repulse; till at last he was reduced to plead for his life. The army, in the instance before us, exercised the supreme magistracy in their several decisions.

The Barbarians were at first unknown to the Romans, and for some time afterwards only incommodious; but at last they became formidable to them, by an event altogether unparalleled at that time, and which perhaps may never be equalled hereafter. Rome had so effectually extinguished all nations, that when she at last was vanquished in her turn, the earth seemed to produce a new race of mankind, to accomplish her destruction.

Those princes who have large dominions seldom find them bordered by any territories considerable enough to be the objects of their ambition; and should there be any such, they would naturally be swallowed up in a series of conquest. We will say they are bounded then by seas and mountains, and vast deserts, whose sterility rendered them contemptible. The Romans for this reason suffered the Germans to range in their forests and gloomy wilds, and let the northern nations shiver amidst the polar snow; and yet those inhospitable regions produced a people, who at last enslaved the conquerors of the world.

In

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In the reign of Gallus a mighty collection of nations, who afterwards became more celebrated, spread their ravages thro' all Europe, and the Persians having invaded Syria, abandoned their conquests only to preserve their booty.

The miserable disorders which had so long been springing up in the several successions of the emperors, were now come to their fatal maturity, and that period which was concurrent with the close of VALERIAN'S reign, and the duration of that of his son GALLIENUS, produced thirty pretenders to the empire, the greatest part of whom being swept away by their mutual contentions, their devastations were limited to a short reign; and they gained nothing durable but the appellation of the Thirty tyrants.

Valerian having been taken prisoner by the Persians, and his son Gallienus neglecting the public affairs, the Barbarians penetrated into all parts, and the empire was now in the same condition it was afterwards reduced to in the west<sup>e</sup>, at the close of another century, and it would then have felt its last convulsions, had not a happy conjunction of events interposed for its preservation.

<sup>e</sup> An hundred and fifty years after this event, the Barbarians invaded the empire in the reign of Honorius.

The terrible confusion in succeeding to the empire being come to its height, we find at the end of the reign of Valerianus, and during that of Gallienus his son, no less than thirty pretenders to the throne, most of whom having got possession of it, and reigned for a very short time, were called the **TYRANTS**.

Odenatus, prince of Palmyra, and one of the Roman allies, dislodged the Persians, who had invaded the greatest part of Asia: Rome furnished an army of its own citizens, and they effectually delivered it from the Barbarians who came to pillage their city: An innumerable army of Scythians, who put to sea in a fleet of five thousand ships, entirely perished by storms, fatigue and famine, and even by their formidable grandeur; and Gallienus being at last slain, Claudius, Aurelian, Tacitus, and Probus, who happily succeeded him, and were four extraordinary princes, snatched the empire from the verge of ruin.

## C H A P T E R XIX.

### *Changes in the STATE.*

**T**HE emperors, to prevent the continual treasons of the army, associated into the government proper persons in whom they might confide; and **DIOCLESIAN**, under



der pretext of the weight and multiplicity of the public affairs, established a law, that there should always be two emperors and as many Cæsars. He judged, that, by this proceeding, the four principal armies being possessed by the partners in the empire, would naturally intimidate one another, and that the inferior armies being too weak to have any thoughts of raising their chiefs to the imperial dignity, their custom of election would be gradually discontinued, and entirely abolished at last. Besides, the dignity of the Cæsars being always subordinate, that power, which, for the security of the government, was in the participation of four, would be exercised in its full extent by no more than two.

The soldiers were likewise restrained from their exorbitances by considering, that as the riches of particular persons as well as the public treasure were considerably diminished, the emperors were in no condition to offer them such large donations as formerly, and consequently the gratuities would be no longer proportionable to the danger of a new election.

We may add to this, that the prefects of the prætorian bands, whose power and employments rendered them the grand visiers of those times, and frequently tempted them to murder their emperors, in order to raise themselves to the throne, were greatly

ly reduced by Constantine, who divested them of all but their civil functions, and augmented their number to four instead of two.

The lives of the emperors began now to be in greater security, and they might reasonably expect to die peaceably in their beds. This circumstance seems in some measure to have softened their dispositions, and they no longer shed human blood with the barbarous prodigality of their predecessors. But as the immense power they still possessed must needs have some particular tendency, it began to manifest itself in a species of tyranny less glaring than the former. The subjects were no longer affrighted with inhuman massacres, but then they were harassed by unjust sentences and forms of judicature, which seemed to defer death only to render life itself uncomfortable. The court governed, and was likewise swayed in its turn, by a greater variety of artifices and a more exquisite train of political refinements, which were conducted with greater silence than usual. In a word, instead of an unterrified disposition to form a bad action, and a cruel precipitation to commit it, those gigantic iniquities shrunk into the vices of weak minds, and could only be called languid crimes.

A new train of corruption was now introduced, the first emperors pursued pleasures,

fures, but these sunk into softness. They shewed themselves with less frequency to the soldiers, were more indolent and fonder of their domestics, more devoted to the palace, and more abstracted from the empire.

The poison of the court grew more malignant in proportion to the disguise it assumed. All direct terms were disused in discourse, and distant insinuations became the dialect of the palace. Every shining reputation was sullied, and the ministers as well as the officers of the army were perpetually left to the discretion of that sort of people, who, as they cannot be useful to the state themselves, suffer none to serve it with reputation and glory. In a word, that affability of the first emperors, which alone qualified them for an insight into their affairs, was now entirely discarded. The prince had no informations, but what were conveyed to him by the canal of a few favourites, who being always in concert together, and even when they seemed to disagree in their opinions, were only in the province of a single person to their sovereign.

The residence of several emperors in Asia, and their perpetual competition with the kings of Persia, made them form a resolution to be adored like those monarchs; and  
Diocle-

Dioclesian, tho' others say Galerius, published an edict to that effect.

This pompous imitation of the Asiatic pride being once established, the people were soon habituated to such a spectacle, and when Julian would have regulated his conduct by a modest simplicity of manners, that proceeding which was no more than a renovation of the ancient behaviour, was imputed to him as a reproachful inattention to his dignity.

Tho' several emperors had reigned after Marcus Aurelius, yet the empire was undivided; and as the authority of those princes was acknowledged in all the provinces, it was but one power tho' exercised by many persons.

But GALERIUS <sup>f</sup> and CONSTANTIUS CHLORUS, being at variance with each other, divided the empire in reality; and this example, which was afterwards followed by CONSTANTINE, who pursued the plan of Galerius and not that of Dioclesian, introduced a custom which might be called a revolution rather than a change.

We may likewise add, that the strong desire of Constantine to be the founder of a new city, and an impulse of vanity to distinguish it by his own name, determined him to transfer the seat of empire to the east. Though Rome was far from being so

<sup>f</sup> See Orosius, l. vii. and Aurelius Victor.



spacious within the walls as it is at present, yet the suburbs were prodigiously extensive<sup>c</sup>: Italy was filled with seats of pleasure, and might properly be called the garden of Rome. The husbandmen were in Sicily, Africa, and Egypt<sup>d</sup>; but the gardeners lived altogether in Italy. The lands were generally cultivated by the slaves of the Roman citizens, but when the seat of empire was established in the east, all Rome was in a manner transplanted to that situation. Thither did the grandees send their slaves, or, in other words, the greatest part of the people, and Italy was almost exhausted of its inhabitants.

It was Constantine's intention that the new city should not be inferior in any particular to the old one; and therefore he took care to have it sufficiently supplied with corn, commanding all the harvest of Egypt to be sent to Constantinople, and consigning that of Africa to Rome, which does not seem to have been a very judicious proceeding.

Whilst the republic subsisted, the people of Rome, who were then the sovereigns

<sup>c</sup> *Expatiantia testa multos addidere urbes*, saies Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. iii.

<sup>d</sup> Corn, says Tacitus, was formerly exported from Italy to the distant provinces, and it is not a barren land now; but we cultivate Africa and Egypt, and choose to expose the lives of the Roman people to danger.

of all other nations, became naturally intitled to a proportion of the tribute: This circumstance induced the senate to sell them corn, at first, for a low price, and afterwards to make a gratuitous distribution of it among them; and when monarchy itself was introduced, this latter custom was still continued, though entirely opposite to the principles of that form of government. 'Tis true, the abuse remained unrectified through an apprehension of the inconveniencies that would have risen from its discontinuance; but when Constantine founded a new city he established the same custom without the least appearance of reason.

When Augustus had conquered Egypt, he conveyed the treasure of the Ptolemys to Rome; and this proceeding occasioned much the same revolution, which the discovery of the Indies afterwards effected in Europe, and which some ridiculous schemes have since accomplished in our time. The revenue was doubled at Rome,<sup>h</sup> and as that city continued to absorb all the riches of Alexandria, which was itself the repository of the treasures of Africa and the East; gold and silver by these means became very common in Europe, and the people were

<sup>h</sup> Sueton. in August. Oros. l. vi. Rome often met with these revolutions. I have before observed that the treasures brought thither from Macedonia superseded all farther tribute. Cicero in his *Offices*, l. ii.

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able to pay very considerable taxations even in money.

But when the empire was afterwards divided, all these riches flowed in a full tide to Constantinople ; and we may add to this unhappy circumstance, that the mines in Germany <sup>i</sup> had not then been opened : that those of Italy <sup>k</sup> and Gaul were very few and inconsiderable, and that the mines of Spain <sup>l</sup> had not been worked since the Carthaginians lost that country, or at least they were not so productive as formerly ; Italy itself was now a continued waste of forsaken gardens, and consequently could not be in any condition to draw money from the East, whilst the West at the same time was drained of all its wealth, by the oriental merchants who supplied the inhabitants with their necessary commodities. Gold and silver, by these means, became extremely scarce in Europe, and yet the emperors extorted the same pecuniary tributes as formerly, which completed the general destruction.

<sup>i</sup> Tacitus, *De moribus Germanorum*, declares this in express terms. Besides we know pretty near the time in which most of the mines of Germany were opened. See Thomas Sessreiberus of the origin of the mines of the Harts. Those of Saxony are thought to be less ancient.

<sup>k</sup> See Pliny *Nat. Hist.* xxxvii. 77.

<sup>l</sup> The Carthaginians, saies Diodorus, understood very well the art of making an advantage of them ; and the Romans that of hindering others from making such advantage.

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When a government has been established in one certain form, and its political circumstances are adjusted to a particular situation, it is generally prudent to leave them in that condition; for the same causes which have enabled such a state to subsist, though they may frequently be complicated and unknown, will still continue to support it; but when the whole system is changed, remedies can only be accommodated to the inconveniences visible in the theory, whilst others, which nothing but experience can point out, are lurking without opposition, in the new plan.

For these reasons, though the empire grew already too great, yet it was effectually ruined by the divisions into which it was parcelled, because all the parts of this vast body, had for a long series of time been arranged so as to become settled and steady, and were compacted by a mutual dependency through the whole.

Constantine, <sup>m</sup> after he had weakened the capital, proceeded to impair the frontiers by drawing off those legions who were stationed on the banks of great rivers, and distributing them into the provinces. This in-

<sup>m</sup> This account of Constantine's proceedings no way contradicts the ecclesiastical writers, who declare they confine themselves to those actions of this prince which had any relation to religion, without concerning themselves with the political transactions in that reign. Euseb. Life of Constantine, l. i. c. 9. Socrates l. i. c. 1.

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novation was extremely prejudicial in more instances than one ; for as the barrier which comprehended so many nations was now removed ; so the soldiers <sup>a</sup> passed all their time, and grew effeminate in the Circus and the theatres °.

When Julian was sent by Constantius into Gaul, he found that fifty towns on the Rhine <sup>p</sup> had been taken by the Barbarians, that the provinces were all plundered, and that there was now no more than the shadow of a Roman army, which fled at the very mention of the enemies name.

This prince by his wisdom, <sup>q</sup> and perseverance, joined with oeconomy, conduct, and valour, and prospered by a noble series of heroic actions, chased the Barbarians out of

<sup>a</sup> Zozimus l. ii.

° After the establishment of Christianity, the combats of gladiators were very seldom exhibited, and Constantine prohibited them by his authority ; but this barbarous custom was not entirely abolished till the time of Honorius. The Romans retained nothing of their ancient shews, but what tended to emasculate their minds and allure them to pleasure. In former times, the soldiers before they took the field were entertained with a combat of gladiators, to familiarise them to the sight of blood and weapons of war, and to inspire them with intrepidity when they engaged the enemy. Jul. Capit. Life of Maximus and Balbinus.

<sup>p</sup> Ammian. Marcellin. l. xvi, xvii, and xviii.

<sup>q</sup> Ammian Marcellin. *ibid*.

their new settlements, and his name became a terror as long as he lived <sup>r</sup>.

No prince saw the necessity of restoring the ancient plan, more than Valentinian. His whole life was employed in fortifying the banks of the Rhine, making levies, raising castles, placing troops in proper stations, and furnishing them with subsistence on those frontiers ; but an event that afterwards happened, determined his brother Valens to open the Danube, and that proceeding was attended with very dreadful consequences.

That tract of land which lies between the Palus Mæotis, the mountains of Caucasus and the Caspian sea, was inhabited by a numerous people who composed great part of the nation of the Huns or that of the Alans. The soil was exceeding fertile ; the inhabitants were fond of wars and robberies ; and were always either on horseback or in their chariots, and wandered about the country wherein they were inclosed : They sometimes made depredations on the frontiers of Persia and Armenia ; but the ports of the Caspian sea were easily guarded, and it was difficult for them to penetrate into Persia, by any other avenues ; and as they

<sup>r</sup> See the noble panegyrick made by Ammianus Marcellinus on this prince, l. xxv.

imagined

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imagined it impracticable to cross the Palus Mæotis, they were altogether unacquainted with the Romans; so that whilst other Nations of Barbarians ravaged the empire, these confined them within the limits which their ignorance had drawn around them.

It has been the opinion of some,<sup>s</sup> that the slime which was rolled down by the current of the Tanais, had by degrees formed a kind of incrustation on the surface of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, over which these people are supposed to have passed. Others<sup>t</sup> inform us, that two young Scythians being in full pursuit of a hind, the terrified creature swam over that arm of the sea, upon which the youths immediately following her in the same track, were exceedingly astonished to find themselves in a new world; and at the return to the old one, they gave their countrymen<sup>v</sup> a particular account of the strange lands, and, if I may be indulged in the expression, the inviting Indies they had lately discovered.

Upon this information, an innumerable body of Huns immediately passed those streights; and, meeting first with the Goths,

<sup>s</sup> Zozimus. l. 4.

<sup>t</sup> Jornandes de rebus Geticis. The Miscellaneous hist. of Procopius.

<sup>v</sup> Vide Sæzomen. l. 6.

made that people fly before them. It should seem as if these mighty countries poured their nations out precipitately upon one another, and that Asia had acquired a new weight to make it ponderate equal to the European power.

The Goths in consternation presented themselves on the banks of the Danube, and with a suppliant air intreated the Romans to allow them a place of refuge. The flatterers <sup>w</sup> of Valens improved this conjuncture, and represented it as a fortunate conquest of a new people, who by the accession of their numbers would defend and enrich the empire,

Valens ordered <sup>x</sup> them to be admitted into his territories, upon delivering up their arms, but his officers suffered them to repurchase with their money as many as they pleased; they were afterwards distributed into several allotments of land; but the Goths, <sup>y</sup> contrary to the custom of the

<sup>w</sup> Ammian. Marcellin. l. 29.

<sup>x</sup> Several of those who had received these orders abandoned themselves to a brutal passion for some of the male refugees; others were ensnared by the beauty of the young Barbarians of the other sex, and became the captives of their female slaves; a third sort were corrupted by presents in money, linen habits, and fringed mantles; and all their thoughts only tended to enrich their houses with slaves, and to stock their farms with cattle. Hist. of Dexippus.

<sup>y</sup> See the Gothick history by Priscus, who has set this difference of customs in a clear light. It may be asked

Huns,



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Huns, did not cultivate the portions of ground assigned them. They were even left destitute of the promised supplies of corn, and were ready to perish amidst a land of plenty ; they were armed for war, and yet unjustly insulted. In consequence of these provocations they ravaged all the country from the Danube to the Bosphorus ; they destroyed Valens and all his army, and repassed the Danube only to quit the hideous solitude they had effected by their devastations<sup>2</sup>. \*

perhaps, how it was possible for nations who never cultivated their lands, to be so powerful, when those of America are so very weak : It is because people who follow a pastoral life are furnished with a better subsistence, than those, who live by the chase.

It appears by the account given by Ammianus Marcellinus that the Huns in their first settlements did not manure their lands, and only subsisted on their flocks and herds in a country that abounded with rich pastures, and was watered with many rivers ; such is the practice of the inhabitants of little Tartary, which is part of the same country. And it is probable that the nations we have been speaking of, having, after their migrations from their native land, settled in countries that afforded little or no pasturage for their cattle, applied themselves to the cultivation of the soil.

<sup>2</sup> See Zozimus l. iv. See also Dexiprus's Extract of the Embassies of Constantine Porphyrogenitus.

\* See Gibbon. ch. 26. N. 136.

## CHAPTER XX.

*An Account of some new Maxims received by the Romans.*

Sometimes, the pusillanimous spirit of the emperors <sup>a</sup>, and frequently the defenceless state of the empire, made the people employ their money to appease the nations who threatened to invade them; but the desired peace could never be effectually purchased, because those who sold it could, whenever they pleased, oblige the Romans to buy it again.

It is much better to hazard an unsuccessful war, than to part with great sums for a precarious peace; for a prince is always respected when it is known he will make a long resistance before he can be vanquished.

Besides, such gratifications as these were changed into tribute at last, and though they were free at the beginning, they became necessary in the event, and passed for an acquired property: For which reason, when an emperor refused them to some particular people, or was not disposed to give them so much as they demanded, they immediately

<sup>a</sup> At first they gave all to the soldiers; afterwards all to the enemy.

declared

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declared themselves his mortal enemies. To produce an instance or two, from a thousand : The army which Julian led against the Persians, <sup>b</sup> was pursued in its retreat from the East, by the Arabians, to whom the customary tribute had been refused : And in a short time afterwards, in the reign of Valentinian, the Germans <sup>c</sup>, who had been offered more inconsiderable presents than usual, grew exasperated at that disobliging frugality, and these northern people being already influenced by a point of honour, avenged themselves, of this pretended insult, by a cruel war.

All those nations who surrounded the empire in Europe and Asia, exhausted it by degrees of its riches ; and as the Romans derived their grandeur and power from the gold and silver, which flowed into the empire from the coffers of so many kings ; they now grew weak and despicable, <sup>d</sup> because

<sup>b</sup> Ammian. Marcellin. l. 24.

<sup>c</sup> Idem. l. 26.

<sup>d</sup> You would willingly be rich, *said Julian to his mutinous army*, there's Persia for your purpose, let us march thither ; for, believe me, all the riches of the Roman republic are now no more, our poverty is owing to those who persuaded our princes to purchase peace from the Barbarians. Our treasury is exhausted, our cities are in ruins, and our provinces look dreadful with desolation. An emperor who knows no riches but those of the mind is not ashamed to acknowledge a virtuous and irreproachable poverty. You may revolt if

the same gold and silver was drained from them by other nations.

The misconduct of politicians is not always voluntary, but happens frequently to be the unavoidable consequence of their particular situation, and therefore one inconvenience is generally the offspring of another.

The army as we have already declared, became very expensive to the state, and the soldiers had three sorts of advantages; their ordinary pay, donations of recompense after their services, and accidental liberalities, which were often claimed as stated properties by a body of men who had both princes and people in their power.

The inability of the people to furnish these expences, obliged them to employ a less chargeable soldiery, and treaties were struck up with barbarous nations, who had neither the luxury of the Roman army, nor the same spirit and pretensions.

There was another advantage, besides this; for as the Barbarians poured their troops into a country with the greatest pre-

you are so disposed; for my part, either death shall relieve me, for I scorn a life of which the least fever can deprive me, as effectually as my sword; or I will retire from the world, for I have not passed my days in such a manner as to be incapable of a private life. Amm. Marcell. l. xxiv.

cipitation,



icipation, the Romans being unprovided for their reception and finding it sometimes difficult to raise levies in the provinces, were obliged to hire another party of Barbarians, who were always mercenary, and eager for battle and plunder. This expedient had its use in the present emergency, but when that was over, the Romans found it as difficult to rid themselves of their new allies, as of their enemies themselves.

The ancient Romans never suffered the auxiliary troops to outnumber their own, in their armies<sup>e</sup>; and though their allies might properly be reputed their subjects, yet they had no inclination to let those subjects be better warriors than themselves.

But in the latter times, this proportion of the auxiliaries was not only disregarded, but even the national troops were composed of Barbarian soldiers.

Thus were customs established, quite opposite to those which had rendered the Romans masters of the world, and as the genius of their former politics always prompted them to reserve the military art to themselves, and exclude their neighbours from any participation of its principles, they now

<sup>e</sup> This observation is made by Vegetius, and it appears from Livy, that if the auxiliaries sometimes exceeded the Romans in number, the superiority was very inconsiderable.

extinguished it in their own people, and established it among foreigners.

Take this compendium of the Roman history: They subdued all nations, by their maxims, but when they had so far succeeded, their republic could not subsist any longer; the plan of their government must be changed, and maxims contrary to the first, being then introduced, they were divested of all their Grandeur.

Fortune never interposes in the government of this world, and we may be convinced of this truth by the Romans, who enjoyed a continual series of prosperity when they regulated their conduct by one invariable plan; but they suffered an uninterrupted train of calamities, when they acted upon different principles. There are a set of general causes, either moral or physical, which operate in every monarchy, and either raise and maintain it, or else involve it in ruin. All accidental conjunctures are subordinate to these causes; and if the hazard of a battle, which in other words is no more than a particular cause, has been destructive to a state, some general cause presided and made a single battle be the inevitable ruin of that state. In a word, the tendency of the main principle draws after it all the particular incidents.

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We are sensible, that for two centuries past, the Danish troops have been generally defeated by the Swedes; we may therefore conclude, that, independent of the bravery of the two nations, and the chance of war, either their civil or military government is disconcerted by some secret flaw which produces this effect, and I am of opinion it may easily be discovered.

In a word, the Romans lost their military discipline, and even neglected it in their very arms. Vegetius<sup>f</sup> acquaints us, that the soldiers finding them too ponderous, obtained the emperor Gratian's permission to quit their coats of mail; and soon after their helmets, and when their bodies were thus defenceless, they grew attentive to nothing but flight,

The same author adds, they had lost the art of fortifying their camp, and that by this negligence they were easily overwhelmed by the Barbarian horde.

The cavalry of the first Romans was not numerous, it was but the eleventh part of a legion, and often less, and what is extraordinary, was made less use of by them than by us, who are obliged to carry on so many sieges, where cavalry is of little service. When the Roman empire was in its decay, their forces consisted of little else but cavalry.

<sup>f</sup> De re Militari, l. i. c. 20.

I imagine, as a nation improves in the knowledge of the military art, it trusts the more to its infantry ; and as that science decreases, it increases its cavalry in proportion : the reason is, because the infantry, whether light or heavy, is nothing without discipline, whereas, the cavalry is always of use even in its disorder <sup>z</sup>. The action of the latter consists chiefly in its impetuosity and sudden shock ; that of the former in its resistance and impenetrable firmness, which is not so much action as re-action. Lastly, the force of the cavalry is momentaneous ; that of the infantry of longer duration ; now there is need of discipline to continue it in a persevering state.

The Romans arrived at universal monarchy not only by the arts of war, but likewise by their wisdom, their perseverance, their passion for glory, and their heroic love for their country : and when even these virtues disappeared under the emperors, and they had only the art military among them, yet this alone, notwithstanding the weakness and tyranny of their princes, enabled them to preserve their former acquisitions. But when corruption

<sup>z</sup> The cavalry of the Tartars, without observing any of our military maxims, has at all times performed great things. See the histories, and particularly those of the conquest of China.



had at last insinuated itself among the soldiery, they became the prey of every nation.

An empire founded by arms, must likewise have arms for its support. But as a people, when their state is in confusion, are at a loss how to rectify their civil disorders; in the same manner, when they enjoy a profound peace, and are respected for their power, they never imagine this calm scene may change, and consequently neglect their military force, from whence as they have nothing more to hope, so they fancy they have all things to fear, and sometimes proceed so far as to weaken that basis of their welfare.

It was an inviolable law among the Romans, that whoever abandoned his post or quitted his arms in the combat, should be punished with death. Julian and Valentinian, had reinforced the ancient penalties in this particular; but the Barbarians who were taken into the Roman pay<sup>h</sup>, and were accustomed to make war in the manner now practised by the Tartars, who flie in order to rally, and are more sollicitous for

<sup>h</sup> They would not submit to the Roman discipline. See Ammianus Marcellinus l. xviii. who relates it as an extraordinary circumstance, that they condescended in one instance to please Julian, who intended to fortify several places belonging to the state.

plunder than martial reputation, were incapable of conforming to such severe regulations.

The discipline of the ancient Romans was so strict, that they have had generals who sentenced their own children to die, for gaining a battle without their orders : But when they were intermixed with the Barbarians, they contracted, from that association, the same spirit of independency which marks out the character of those nations ; and such who read the wars of Belisarius with the Goths, will see a general very frequently disobeyed by his officers.

Sylla and Sertorius amidst the fury of civil wars would rather die than connive at any thing from whence Mithridates might derive the least advantage ; but in the succeeding times, when a minister<sup>i</sup> or any grandee imagined it would be favourable to his avarice, his revenge, or ambition to admit the Barbarians into the empire, he immediately permitted them to give a loose to their depredations.

No states are more necessitated for tributes, than those which are weak, because this cir-

<sup>i</sup> This was not to be wondered at in that mixture of nations, who had been used to a wandering life, and had no knowledge of any country of their own, since entire bodies of them would frequently side with the enemy who had conquered them, even against their own nation, See Procopius's account of the Goths under Vitiges.

circumstance obliges them to augment their charges in proportion to the people's inability to defray them; and therefore the tributes in the Roman provinces became insupportable.

It would not be improper to read Salvian's <sup>k</sup> account of the horrible exactions that were made upon the people. The citizens were so harrassed by the farmers of the revenue, that they were obliged either to seek refuge among the Barbarians, or surrender their liberty to the first of their insatiable countrymen who would accept of such a present.

This may account for the relations we find in our French history, of the patience with which the Gauls supported a revolution calculated to establish that shocking distinction between a gallant nation, and a community of servile wretches; I say, between a nation who retained their liberty and military privileges, and an ignoble body of people. The Barbarians, in making so many citizens slaves to till the earth, that is, the country to which they were attached, introduced no services which were not more cruelly exacted before<sup>m</sup>.

<sup>k</sup> See his whole fifth book, de Gubernatione Dei. See also in the account of the Embassy written by Priscus, the speech of a Roman who had settled among the Huns, on his happiness in that country.

## CHAPTER XXI.

*Some Particulars of the Grandeur of Attila.  
The establishment of the Barbarians accounted for. Reasons why the Western Empire was overturned, before that in the East.*

**A**S christianity was established when the empire was in a declining condition, the professors of this religion reproached the Pagans for that decay, and these retorted the charge on the religious doctrines of their antagonists. The christians replied, that Dioclesian<sup>n</sup> ruined the empire, by associating his three colleagues; because each emperor would be altogether as expensive, and maintained as great armies as could have subsisted had there been but one sovereign; in consequence of which, those who furnished the contributions being unequally proportioned to the number of the receivers, the charge became so excessive, that the lands were forsaken by the husbandmen, and for want of cultivation lay waste, and were covered with wild and barren forests.

<sup>m</sup> See Salvian, lib. v. and the laws of the Code, and the Digest on them.

<sup>n</sup> Lactantius, De morte persecutor.



The Pagans, on the other hand, were perpetually exclaiming against the strange innovations in religion, introduced by their adversaries and never heard of till those days; and as the overflowings of the Tyber, and other prejudicial effects of nature, were, in the flourishing state of Rome, ascribed to the displeasure of the Gods; so the calamities of declining Rome were imputed to a religious novelty, and the subversion of the ancient altars.

Symmachus the prefect, in a letter <sup>a</sup> to the emperors, relating to the altar of Victory, attacked the christian religion with arguments extremely popular, and consequently very seducing, and had art enough to set them off with all the plausibility invention could furnish.

“What circumstance, says he, can lead us more effectually to the knowledge of the Gods, than the experience of our former prosperity? We ought to be faithful to such a series of ages, and pursue the same track in which our fathers so happily followed their ancestors. Imagine Rome her self speaks to you in this manner: O imperial princes! Compassionate fathers of your country! look with eyes of veneration on those years of mine, wherein I always conformed to the ceremonies of my predecessors. Those

<sup>a</sup> Letter of Symmach. l. x. 4.

sacred institutions have made the universe obedient to my laws. These were the allies that chased Hannibal from my walls, and drove the Gauls in confusion from the capitol. We fervently ask peace for the Gods of our country, nay we solicit it in the anguish of our souls, for our compatriot Deities! We have no inclination to engage in disputes which are only proper for idle persons, and we would express our selves in the language of supplication, and not of war".

Symmachus was answered by three celebrated authors. Orosius composed his history to prove there had always been calamities in the world, as great as those complained of by the Pagans. Salvian likewise writ his book <sup>p</sup>, wherein he maintains, that the ravages of the Barbarians were to be imputed to the degenerate behaviour of the christians: And St. Austin <sup>q</sup> demonstrates, that the city of heaven is very different from that city on earth, in which the ancient Romans received, for a few human virtues, a recompence as vain as the virtues themselves.

We have already observed, that part of the politics of the ancient Romans consisted in dividing all the powers that gave them any umbrage; but that scheme was defeated

<sup>p</sup> Of God's government.

<sup>q</sup> Of the city of God.

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in after times, and Rome could not prevent Attila from conquering all the northern nations: He extended his victories from the Danube to the Rhine, demolished all the forts and military works on the banks of those rivers, and made both the empires tributary.

Theodosius, says he<sup>r</sup>, with an insolent air, is descended from a father as noble as mine; but the moment I compelled him to pay tribute to me, he fell from the grandeur of his extraction, and became my vassal; and therefore 'tis unjust in him to act like a base slave, and endeavour to prejudice his master by treachery.

“ An emperor, said he, upon another occasion, ought not to be a liar; he promised one of my subjects to give him the daughter of Saturnilus in marriage; and I will immediately declare war against him, if he presumes to depart from his word; but if the disobedience of those about him put it out of his power to be punctual, I will march to his assistance”.

It is not to be imagined that Attila was induced by any moderation and lenity of temper, to let the Romans subsist; he only conformed himself to the genius of his na-

<sup>r</sup> History of the Goths, and relation of the embassy written by Priscus. This emperor was Theodosius the younger.

The Goths after the defeat of Valens never abandoned  
the Roman Territory. Claudian says (*De Bello Getico*  
4. l. 202.) It is now 30 years

Ex quo jam patulos gens hec oblata triones  
Atque Istrum transvecta semel, vestigia fixit  
Thracie funesta solo —

The Error is inexcusable. since it disguises the principal  
& immediate cause of the fall of the Western Empire of Rome.  
Gibbon. Ch. 26. N. 136 —



tion, which prompted them to awe, and not to conquer foreign states. This prince retiring from the splendor of majesty to his mansion built of wood, according to the representation of Priscus<sup>s</sup>, though at the same time he was lord of all the barbarous nations, and in some degree master of the chief part of those who were civilized<sup>t</sup>, was one of the greatest monarchs recorded in history.

Ambassadors were dispatched to his court, both from the eastern and western empires of the Romans, to receive his laws and implore his favour. Sometimes he commanded them to deliver up the Huns who had deserted from his armies, or the Roman slaves who had escaped from the vigilance of his officers. At other times he would not be satisfied till some minister of the emperor was surrendered into his power. He charged the empire of the east with a tribute of two hundred thousand pounds of gold; he received the yearly sum allowed to a Roman general, and sent those he intended to re-

<sup>s</sup> History of the Goths. *Hæ sedes regis barbariem totam tenentis; hæ captis civitatibus habitacula præponebat.* This was the mansion in which the monarch of all the Barbarian nations resided; this the habitation which he preferred to the stately cities he had conquer'd. *Jornandes de Rebus Geticis.*

<sup>t</sup> It appears by the account given by Priscus, that the court of Attila had some thoughts of subjecting even the Persians.

ward

ward to Constantinople, that they might be gratified to their utmost wish, making by this means a constant traffic of the apprehensions of the Romans.

He was feared by his subjects <sup>u</sup>, but we have no reason to believe they entertained any aversion to his person: He was surprisingly fierce and impetuous, and at the same time exceeding politic and artful. He appeared violent in his rage, but had a sufficient presence of mind to know when to pardon an offence or defer a punishment, as the circumstances were more or less agreeable to his interest. War was never his choice, when he could derive sufficient advantages from peace. He was faithfully served even by the kings who were subordinate to his power; and had collected into his own conduct all the ancient simplicity of the northern manners. In a word, we can never sufficiently admire this gallant sovereign of a people, whose very children were warmed with enthusiastic rage, at the relation of their father's bravery; whilst those fathers shed manly tears, because they were incapacitated by age to imitate their martial children.

All the Barbarian nations, after his death, were divided into several independent bodies; but the Romans were then so weak,

<sup>u</sup> Jornandes and Priscus have drawn the character of this prince, and described the manners of his court.

that

that the most inconsiderable people were in a condition to molest them.

The empire was not ruined by any particular invasion, but sunk gradually under the weight of the several attacks made upon it, after that general assault it sustained in the time of Gallus. It seemed indeed, to be reestablished, because none of its territories were dismembred from the main body; but it was stooping to its fall by several degrees of declension, till it was at once laid low in the reigns of Arcadius and Honorius.

In vain did the Romans chase the Barbarians from their settlements in the empire; that people, without any compulsion would have retired, to depose their spoils in their own country. With as little success did Rome endeavour to exterminate that nation, since her cities were still sacked <sup>w</sup>, her villages consumed with flames, and her families either slaughtered or dispersed.

When one province had been wasted, the Barbarians who succeeded the first ravagers, meeting with nothing for their purpose, proceeded to another. Their devastations at first were limited to Thrace, Mysia, and Pannonia, and when these coun-

<sup>w</sup> The Goths were a very destructive nation, they destroyed all the husbandmen in Thrace, and cut off the hands of every charioteer. Byzantine history of Malchus, in the extract of the embassies,

## DECLENSION of the ROMANS. 265

tries were ruined, they destroyed Macedonia, Thessaly, and Greece; from thence they expatiated to Noricum. The empire, that is to say, those tracts of land which were not depopulated, was continually shrinking, and Italy at last became the frontiers.

The reason why the Barbarians established themselves in no fixed settlements in the reigns of Gallus and Gallienus, was because the countries about them had something left that was worth plundering.

Thus the Normans, who in some measure resembled the conquerors of the empire, ravaged France for several centuries, and when at last they could find no more booty, they thought fit to accept of a depopulated province, and parcelled it into \* several properties.

Scythia in those times, lying waste and uncultivated †, the inhabitants were frequently subject to famine, and subsisted in a great measure by their commerce with the

\* See in the chronicles, collected by Andrew du Chesne, the condition of this province, towards the end of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century. Script. Norman. Hist. Veteres.

† The Goths, as we have intimated, did not cultivate their lands.

The Vandals called them Trulli, which was the name of a small measure, because they once sold them such a measure of corn very dear, in a famine. Olympiodor. in Biblioth. Phot. l. xxx.



Romans <sup>2</sup>, who furnished them with provisions from the provinces bordering on the Danube. The Barbarians in return gave them the booty and prisoners they had taken, and the gold and silver which the Romans paid them for their friendship. But when the empire could no longer afford them a sufficient tribute for their subsistence <sup>3</sup>, they were obliged to fix themselves in some settlement.

The western empire was destroyed before that in the east, for these reasons.

When the Barbarians passed the Danube, they found themselves blocked up on the left hand by the Bosphorus of Thrace, the city of Constantinople, and all the forces of the eastern empire. This made it necessary for them to bend their march to the right towards Illyria, and so proceed westward. That part of the country was crowded with a vast conflux of several nations; and, as the passages into Asia were the best guarded, the whole body of the people bore with a

<sup>2</sup> Priscus relates in his history, that markets were established by treaties on the banks of the Danube.

<sup>3</sup> When the Goths sent to desire Zeno to receive Theuderic the son of Triarius into his alliance, on the terms accorded by him to Theuderic the son of Balamer, the senate being consulted on this occasion, said the revenues of the empire were not sufficient to support two Gothic nations, and that the alliance of only one of them was to be consented to. Malchus's *History*, in the extract of the Embassies.

## DECLENSION *of the* ROMANS. 267

full tide into Europe, whereas the forces of the Barbarians were separated in their first invasion.

The empire being parcelled out into two great portions <sup>b</sup>, the eastern emperors who were then in alliance with the Barbarians <sup>c</sup>, would not break it to assist the princes of the west: This division of the administration, says Priscus <sup>d</sup>, was very prejudicial to the affairs of the West. Thus the Romans of the east, refused those of the west, a naval armament <sup>e</sup>, because they had entered into alliance with the Vandals. The Visigoths in conjunction with Arcadius, made an irruption into the west, and Honorius <sup>f</sup> was obliged to fly to Ravenna: Lastly, Zeno, to get rid of Theodoric, persuaded him to fall upon Italy, which had been already laid waste by Alaric.

There was a very strict alliance <sup>g</sup> between Attila and Genseric, king of the Vandals. The last stood in fear of the Goths <sup>h</sup>; he had married his son to a daughter of their king; and afterwards flitting her nose, had

<sup>b</sup> This partition of the empire was very prejudicial to the affairs of the western Romans. Priscus, l. ii.

<sup>c</sup> Honorius was informed, that the Visigoths had made a descent into the western empire, after an alliance with Arcadius. Procop. Of the Vandal war.

<sup>d</sup> Lib. ii.

<sup>e</sup> Priscus, *ibid*.

<sup>f</sup> Procopius, in his war with the Vandals.

<sup>g</sup> Priscus, l. ii.

<sup>h</sup> See Jornandes, *De rebus Get.* c. xxxvi.

sent her back to her father. For which reason he united with Attila. The two empires enslaved by these two potentates, had no power to shake off their chains. The situation of that of the west was more particularly deplorable: it had no forces at sea<sup>i</sup>, they being all dispersed in Egypt, Cyprus, Phoenicia, Ionia, and Greece, the only countries where at that time commerce subsisted. The Vandals and other nations attacked the west from all sides: an embassy came from Italy to Constantinople, says Priscus<sup>k</sup>, representing that it was impossible they should keep their ground, unless peace was made with the Vandals.

Those that presided in the west were not mistaken in their politics. They judged it necessary to save Italy, which was in some respects the head, and in others the heart of the empire. They removed the Barbarians to the extremities, and settled them there. The design was well laid, and as well executed. These nations asked for nothing but subsistence: they gave them the plains, and reserving to themselves the mountainous parts of the country, the defiles, the passes over rivers, and the strong forts upon them, they kept in their own hands the sovereignty. It is probable these people would have been

<sup>i</sup> This appeared more especially in the war between Constantinus and Licinius.

<sup>k</sup> Priscus, l. ii.

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forced to have become Romans; and the facility with which these ravagers were themselves destroyed by the Franks, by the Greeks, and the Moors, is a proof of this conjecture. This whole system was overthrown by one revolution more fatal than all the rest: the army of Italy, composed of strangers, demanded that which had been granted to nations still greater strangers: it formed under Odoacer, an aristocracy, which claimed the thirds of the lands in Italy; and this was the most fatal blow to the empire.

Amongst so many misfortunes it is natural to enquire with a melancholy curiosity after the fate of Rome: it was, we may say, without defence, and could easily be starved by an enemy. The extent of its walls made it almost impracticable for the inhabitants to defend them; and, as it was situated in a plain, it might be stormed without much difficulty. Besides this, no recruits were to be expected, for the number of people was so extremely diminished, that the emperors were obliged to retire to Ravenna, a city once fortify'd by the sea, as Venice is at this time.

The Romans being generally abandoned by their princes, began to take the sovereign power into their own hands, and stipulated for their safety by treaties<sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> In the time of Honorius, Alaric, who besieged Rome, obliged that city to enter into an alliance with



## 270 *Of the GRANDEUR and*

which is the most likely method of acquiring the supreme authority<sup>m</sup>.

Armorica and Brittany, seeing themselves forsaken, began to regulate themselves by their own laws.

This was the fatal period of the western empire. Rome ascended to such a height of grandeur, because the scenes of her former wars opened successively, and by an incredible felicity of affairs she was never attacked by one nation till another had been first destroyed; but Rome itself was overpowered at last, because she was invaded at once by all the nations around her.

### CHAPTER XXII.

1. *The Conquests of Justinian.*    2. *Some Account of his Government.*

**A**S this vast body of people broke all at once like a flood into the empire, they mutually incommoded one another, and all the politics of those times consisted in setting them at variance together: This was a circumstance easy to accomplish, their avance and fierce disposition greatly contributing to make it practicable. The largest

him, even against the emperor, who was in no condition to oppose it. Procop. War of the Goths, l. i. Zozim. l. vi

<sup>m</sup> Zozim. l. vi.

part

## DECLENSION *of the* ROMANS. 271

part of them was therefore destroyed before they could fix themselves in any settlement ; and this was the reason why the empire of the east still subsisted for some time.

The northern regions were likewise exhausted at last, and no longer poured out those innumerable armies they originally produced ; for after the first invasion by the Goths and Huns, and especially since the death of Attila, these people and their successors appeared in the field with force much inferior to the former in number.

When the nations, who assembled together in the form of an army, were distributed into peaceful partitions of lands, much of their martial vivacity was abated ; and as they were scattered through the countries they had conquered, they were exposed themselves to the same invasions.

In this situation of affairs, Justinian undertook the recovery of Africa and Italy, and accomplished the same designs which the French so happily executed against the Visigoths, the Burgundians, the Lombards and the Saracens.

When christianity was first planted among the Barbarians, the Arian sect was predominant in the empire, and Valens sent priests to them, who were their first apostles. Now in the interval from their conversion to their establishment, this sect fell into disreputation among the Romans ; for which rea-

sons, when the Barbarians of this persuasion found all the country orthodox, and could never insinuate themselves into the affections of the people, it was easy for the emperors to incommode them.

We may likewise add, that the Barbarians being unqualify'd for the siege of towns, and much more so for their defence, suffered the walls to drop into ruins. Procopius informs us, that Belisarius found all the Italian cities in this condition; and those of Africa had already been dismantled by Genferic<sup>a</sup>, with a Gothic view of fortifying the inhabitants.

The generality of these northern people, after they had established themselves in the provinces of the south, soon degenerated into the unmanly softness of those regions, and became incapable of the fatigues of war<sup>o</sup>. The Vandals were emasculated with pleasures; a luxuriant table, an effeminate habit, the delicacy of baths, the enervating lull of music, gay dances, florid gardens and splendid theatres were now become their necessary gratifications.

They no longer disquieted the Romans<sup>p</sup>, says Malchus<sup>q</sup>, when they discontinued those armies which Genferic perpetually

<sup>a</sup> Procop. war of the Vandals, l. i.

<sup>o</sup> Procop. War of the Vandals, l. ii.

<sup>r</sup> In the time of Honorius.

<sup>q</sup> Byzantine history, in the extract of the embassies.

kept prepared for any expedition, and with which he prevented the vigilance of his enemies, and astonished all the world with the rapidity of his enterprises.

The cavalry of the Romans, and that of the Huns their auxiliaries, were very expert at drawing the bow; but that of the Goths<sup>r</sup> and Vandals fought only with the sword and lance, and were unpractised in the distant combat; for which reason Belisarius ascribes part of his success to this difference<sup>s</sup>.

Justinian received signal services from the Huns, a people from whom the Parthians sprung, and these descendants combated like their ancestors. When the Huns lost all their power by the divisions which the great number of Attila's children occasioned, they served the Romans in the quality of auxiliaries, and formed their best cavalry.

Each of these barbarous nations<sup>t</sup> was distinguished by their particular manner of

try: the Alans were heavily armed, and the Heruli were a flying troop.

<sup>r</sup> See Procopius's hist. of the wars of the Vandals, l. i. and his war of the Goths, l. i. The Gothic bowmen fought on foot, and were but indifferently disciplined.

<sup>s</sup> The Romans, having suffered their infantry to be weakened, placed all their force in the horse, and the more so because they were obliged to spring suddenly to every part to check the incursions of the Barbarians.

<sup>t</sup> A remarkable passage of Jornandes tells us all these discriminating circumstances, having occasion



combating as well as by their arms. The Goths and Vandals were formidable at the drawn sword; the Huns were admirable bow men; the Suevi were serviceable infantry; the Alans were heavily armed, and the Heruli were a flying troop. The Romans selected from all these people, the different bodies of troops which were serviceable to their designs, and fought against one nation with the joint advantage of all the rest.

It is remarkable, that the weakest nations have been those that made the greatest establishments; we should be much deceived, if we judged of their force by their conquests. In this long train of irruptions, the Barbarians, or rather the swarms which issued from them, were vanquishers or vanquished; every thing depended on circumstances: and while one great nation was defeated or engaged, a body of new adventurers finding a country open, carried desolation into it. The Goths, who by reason of the disadvantage of their arms were obliged to fly before so many nations settled in Italy, Gaul, and Spain: The Vandals, too weak to keep their possession in Spain, passed into Africa, where they founded a great empire.

Justinian could not fit out more than fifty ships against the Vandals, and when

to mention the battel between the Gepidæ and the sons of Attila.

Beli-

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Belisarius embarked he had but five thousand soldiers. This was undoubtedly a bold expedition; and Leo who before that time had sent against the same people a fleet of all the ships in the east, and manned with a hundred thousand soldiers, could not conquer Africa, and was even in danger of losing the whole empire.

These great fleets have been as little successful as very numerous land armies, for as they impoverish and unpeople a state, so, should the expedition be of a considerable length, or any misfortune befall them, they can neither be succoured nor recruited; and if one part be lost, the other becomes insignificant; because ships of war, as well as transports, cavalry, infantry, ammunition, in a word all the particulars, have a necessary dependance on the whole. The tardiness of an enterprise makes those who engage in it always find the enemy prepared to receive them: besides such an expedition is seldom made in a proper season, and generally overtaken by the stormy months, because such a vast number of preparations are hardly ever compleated till the season is too far advanced.

Belisarius invaded Africa, and very advantageously supplied himself with provisions from Sicily, in consequence of a treaty made with Amalasonta queen of the Goths. When he was sent to attack Italy, he took

notice that the Goths received their subsistence from Sicily, and therefore began his expedition with the conquest of that island, by which proceeding he at the same time starved his enemies, and plentifully supplied his own army with all accommodations.

Belisarius took Carthage, Rome, and Ravenna, and sent the kings of the Goths and Vandals, captives to Constantinople, where the ancient triumphs were renewed after a long interval of Years <sup>u</sup>.

The extraordinary qualities of this great man <sup>v</sup>, naturally account for his success. A general, who was master of all the maxims of the first Romans was then at the head of such an army as that brave people anciently composed.

Virtues that are very shining are generally concealed or lost in servitude ; but the tyrannical government of Justinian could not oppress the grandeur of that soul nor the noble superiority of such a genius.

Narces the eunuch was thrown into this reign to make it still more illustrious : As he had received his education in the palace, he was honoured with a greater share of the emperor's confidence ; for princes always esteem their courtiers the most faithful of their subjects.

<sup>u</sup> Justinian only granted him a triumph for Africa.

<sup>v</sup> See Suidas under the article Belisarius.

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On the other hand, the irregular conduct of Justinian, his profusions, tyranny and rapine, his intoxicated fondness for building, changing and reforming, his inconstancy in his designs, a severe and weak reign, made still more incommodious by a lingering old age, were a train of real calamities, intermixed with unprofitable success, and a false glitter of unsubstantial glory.

These victories were not the effect of any solid power subsisting in the empire, but resulted from the lucky conjunction of some particular circumstances, and were soon rendered ineffectual; for whilst the army was pursuing its fortunate beginnings, a new swarm of barbarous nations passed the Danube and spread desolation through Illyria, Macedonia, and Greece, and the Persians in four invasions weakened the empire with incurable wounds \*.

The more rapid these conquests appeared, the less durable was their foundation; and Italy and Africa were hardly wrested from the enemy, before it became necessary to recover them a second time by new victories.

\* The two empires ravaged each other the more, because they had no hopes of securing their conquests.

Justinian



Justinian had taken from the theatre a  
 \* woman who had long prostituted herself  
 to immodest pleasures, and she governed  
 him with an authority that has no parallel  
 in history, perpetually intermixing his af-  
 fairs with the passions and fanciful incon-  
 sistences of her sex; in consequence of which  
 she defeated the victorious progress of his  
 arms, and disconcerted the most favourable  
 events.

The eastern people were always accus-  
 tomed to a plurality of wives in order to  
 deprive the sex of that strange ascendant  
 they maintain over man in our climates;  
 but at Constantinople the prohibition of  
 Polygamy made the empire subject to the  
 will of a female, or, in other words, threw  
 a natural weakness into the government.

The people of Constantinople had for  
 many years been divided into two factions,  
 denominated the Blue and the Green:  
 They derived their original from the appro-  
 bation usually given in the theatres to some  
 particular actors; and when races were ex-  
 hibited in the circus, the charioteers who  
 were dressed in green disputed the prize  
 with those who were habited in blue, and  
 each of these spectators became interested  
 even to madness, in the competition of those  
 colours

\* The empress Theodora.

These

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These two factions being diffused through all the cities of the empire proportioned their animosities to the rank and grandeur of those cities, or, as we may justly say, to the indolence and idle lives of the generality of the people.

But tho' such divisions are always necessary in a republic, and may be considered as essential to its support, they are infallibly destructive to an arbitrary government because they can only change the person of the sovereign, but never contribute to the establishment of the laws or the discontinuance of abuses.

Justinian who favoured the faction of the Blue <sup>y</sup>, and denied all justice to the Green, increased the mutual inveteracy of both parties, and consequently strengthened them in the state.

These contending parties proceeding so far as even to disannul the authority of the magistrates: The Blues were in no apprehension of the laws, because the emperor protected them against their severity; and the Greens <sup>z</sup> began to disregard them, be-

<sup>y</sup> This political distemper was of ancient date, for Suetonius tells us, that Caligula, because he was attached to the Green faction, hated the people who applauded the other.

<sup>z</sup> The reader may form a good idea of the spirit of those times, by consulting Theophanes, who relates a long conversation in the theatre between the emperor and the Greens.

cause they could not defend them from insults.

All the bands of friendship, affinity and gratitude, were cut asunder and whole families destroyed each other: Every villain who intended to be remarkably wicked belonging to the faction of the Blue, and every man who was either robbed or assassinated was a partisan for the Green.

We may add, that the government, was, if possible, more cruel than senseless, and the emperor not satisfied with the general injustice of loading his subjects with excessive impositions, resolved to ruin them in their private affairs by all imaginable tyrannies.

I am far from entertaining an implicit belief of all the particulars related by Procopius in his secret history, because the pompous commendations he, in his other works, bestows on this prince, may make his veracity a little questionable in this, where he paints him out as the most stupid and inhuman tyrant that ever lived.

On the other hand there are two circumstances which incline me to pay some regard to this secret history; for in the first place, the particulars seem better connected with the astonishing weakness which discovered itself at the latter end of this reign, and in those of the succeeding emperors.

The

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The other circumstance is that monument, which still exists among us, and is a collection of the laws of this emperor, which in the course of a few years present us with greater variations than are to be found in our laws for the three last centuries of our monarchy.

These variations <sup>a</sup> generally relate to matters of so little importance, that we can see no reasons to induce a legislator to make them, unless we refer to the Secret history for a solution, and acknowledge that this prince exposed his judgments and his laws equally to sale.

But the political state of the government received the greatest injury from his project of establishing a general uniformity of opinion in matters of religion, and in circumstances that rendered his zeal as indiscreet as possible.

The ancient Romans fortified their empire by indulging all sorts of religious worship; but their posterity destroyed it by rooting out the various sects, whose doctrines were not predominant.

These sects were composed of entire nations, some of which, as the Jews and Samaritans, had retained their ancient religion after they were conquered by the Romans, others were dispersed through the country, as the followers of Montanus, in Phrygia,

<sup>a</sup> See the institutes of Justinian.



the Manichees, the Sabbatarians, the Arians, in the other provinces, besides which, the generality of the people in the country, continued in idolatry, and were infatuated with a religion as gross as their understandings.

These sects Justinian caused to be extirpated, by the military as well as the civil power; and the persecuted people, revolting in their own defence, he thought himself obliged to exterminate them from the empire; in consequence of which he depopulated several provinces, and whilst he imagined himself increasing the number of the faithful, he was only diminishing the race of mankind.

Procopius assures us that Palestine, by the destruction of the Samaritans, was changed into a desert; and this proceeding was the more singular, because, the very zeal which weakened the empire, in order to establish religion, sprung out of the same quarter from whence the Arabians afterwards sallied with an intention to subvert it.

But nothing could be more aggravating, than that the emperor, whilst he was so averse to all toleration himself, should yet disagree with the empress in the most essential points; he followed the council of Chalcedon, and she favoured its opposers; whether,

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## DECLENSION of *the* ROMANS. 283

whether, as Evagrius says <sup>b</sup>, they were sincere in this proceeding or not, is uncertain.

When we read Procopius's description of Justinian's buildings, and the forts and other places of defence he erected in all parts, it naturally raises in our minds the idea of a flourishing state; but that idea happens to be very delusive.

The ancient Romans had none of these fortifications, but placed all their security in their armies, which they distributed along the banks of rivers, and raised towers at proper distances for the lodgment of the soldiers.

Afterwards indeed, when they had but very indifferent armies, and frequently none at all, the frontiers <sup>c</sup> could not defend the countries they limited, and therefore it became necessary to strengthen them; the consequence of which was, they had more fortifications, and less force; many places for retreat, and very few for security; the country was only habitable about the fortifications, and these were built in all parts. The condition of the empire resembled that

<sup>b</sup> L. iv. c. 10.

<sup>c</sup> Augustus established nine such frontiers, the number of which encreased in the following reigns, when the Barbarians began to appear in several parts; and Dion. l. lv. saies, that, in his time, when Alexander was

of France, in the time of the <sup>d</sup> Normans, which was never so defenceless as when all its villages were girt round with walls.

We may venture to affirm therefore, that the whole catalogue of Justinian's forts, which fills several pages in Procopius, only exhibits to us so many monuments of the weakness of the empire.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### *Disorders in the Eastern Empire.*

**T**HE Persians, during this period, were in a much happier situation than the Romans; they had little reason to be apprehensive of the northern people<sup>e</sup>, because that part of mount Taurus which extends between the Caspian and Euxine seas separated them from those nations, and they effectually shut up a very narrow pass, <sup>f</sup> which was the only practicable avenue for

emperor, there were thirty, as appears by the *Notitia Imperii* written since the reigns of Arcadius and Honorius: There were fifteen even in the eastern empire, and the number was perpetually increasing. Pamphylia, Lycaonia, and Pisidia were made frontiers, and the whole empire was covered with fortifications, till at last Aurelian was obliged to fortify Rome itself.

<sup>d</sup> And the English.

<sup>e</sup> The Huns.

<sup>f</sup> Called the Caspian Streights.

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the cavalry ; in every other part the Barbarians were obliged to descend from frightful precipices <sup>s</sup> and to quit their horses in which all their military strength consisted ; and besides these impediments they were blocked in by the Araxes, a river of great depth, and which flows from west to east, all the passages of which were easy to be defended.

With all these advantages the Persians were in perfect tranquillity with respect to the eastern nations ; on the south they were bounded by the sea ; and the Arabian princes, who were partly their allies, and partly in confederacy with the Romans, were totally engaged in pillaging one another. The Persians therefore had none whom they could properly call their enemies but the Romans. We are sensible, said an ambassador of Hormisdas <sup>h</sup>, that the Romans are engaged in several wars, and are at variance with almost all nations, whilst we, as they well know, have no hostilities with any people but themselves.

The Persians had cultivated the military art to as great a degree as it was neglected by the Romans. Belizarius said to his soldiers, The Persians are not your superiors in

<sup>s</sup> Procopius of the Persian war, l. i.

<sup>h</sup> Menander's ambassies.

courage,



courage, and only surpass you in the discipline of war.

They had likewise the same superiority in the cabinet as they preserved in the field, and demanded tribute of the Romans, under a pretence that they maintained garrisons in the Caspian streights, as if each nation had not a right to guard its frontiers. They obliged them to pay for peace, and every cessation of arms ; and did not scruple to make them purchase the very time employed either in negotiations, or war.

The Avari having crossed the Danube, the Romans, who had seldom any troops to oppose them, being engaged against the Persians when they should have given battle to the Avari, and having full employment from these when they ought to have faced the Persians, were still obliged to submit to a tribute ; and thus the majesty of the empire bowed down before all nations.

JUSTIN, TIBERIUS, and MAURICE were very sedulous to defend the empire ; the last of these princes had some virtues, but they were all sullied by an avarice almost incredible in a great monarch.

The king of the Avari offered to restore all his Roman prisoners to Maurice, if he would ransom them at an inconsiderable price for each man ; and this proposal being  
rejected,

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rejected, he caused them all to be inhumanly murdered. The Roman army was greatly exasperated at this proceeding, and the faction of the Greens making an insurrection at the same time, a centurion nam'd PHOCAS was raised to the imperial dignity, and he ordered Maurice and his children to be put to death.

The history of the Grecian empire, for so we shall denominate the monarchy of the Romans for the future, is little more than a series of revolts, seditions, and perfidy. The subjects had no idea of the loyalty due to princes, and there were so many interruptions in the succession of the emperors, that the title of Porphyrogenitus, which signifies one born in the apartment where the empress reposed, was an appellation which few princes of the several imperial families could with any propriety assume.

All the paths that could be struck out to empire were unexceptionable ; and the candidates were conducted to the diadem by the clergy, the senate, the peasants, the inhabitants of Constantinople, and the people of the provincial cities.

Christianity being now the prevailing religion of the empire, was intermixed with several successive heresies, which called aloud for condemnation. Arius having denied the divinity of the WORD ; the Macedo-  
nians

nians that of the HOLY SPIRIT ; Nestorius the unity of the person of Jesus Christ ; the Eutychians his two natures ; the Monothelites his two wills ; it became necessary to convene councils against them : But their decisions not being universally received, several emperors who had been seduced into these heretical opinions, relapsed into the same persuasions after they had been condemned ; and as no nation was ever so implacable against heretics as the Greeks, who even imagined themselves polluted when they conversed with any of that class, or had any cohabitation with them, several emperors, in consequence of that popular aversion, lost the affections of their subjects, and the people became persuaded that princes who were so frequently rebellious against God, could never be chosen by providence to be their sovereigns.

A new opinion, formed by an idea that it was unlawful to shed christian blood, and which daily grew more popular when the Mohammedans appeared upon the stage of military action, was the cause that offences, in which religion was not directly interested, were punished with great moderation. Those who had spirited up an insurrection, or framed any attempt against the person of the prince, were only sentenced to lose their eyes, to have their hair or noses cut off, or  
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to suffer some other mutilation. As these offences might be committed with very little hazard, they might likewise be attempted without much courage <sup>i</sup>.

A certain veneration for the regalia of imperial majesty drew the eyes of all the people on those who presumed to wear them, and it was criminal to be either habited in purple, or to keep it in a wardrobe; but when a man had once the resolution to appear in that dress, the multitude immediately flocked after him, because their respect was more attached to the apparel than the person.

Ambition received greater provocatives still, from the surprizing insatuation of those times; and there was hardly a man of any considerable consequence who could not accommodate to himself some prediction that promised him the empire.

As the indispositions of the mind are generally incurable <sup>k</sup>, judicial astrology and the art of pointing out futurity by objects seen in a balon of water, succeeded among the christians, to the solemn imposture of divination by the entrails of victims or the flight of birds, which had been abolished

<sup>i</sup> Zeno greatly contributed to this mean relaxation of justice. See the Byzantine history of Malchus, cited in the extracts of the embassies.

<sup>k</sup> See the life of Andronicus Comnenus, compiled by Nicetas.



with paganism its parent ; and vain promises became the motives to most of the rash actions of particular persons, and constituted the wisdom of princes councils.

The calamities of the empire daily increasing, it was natural to impute ill success in war and dishonourable treaties in peace to the injudicious conduct of those at the helm.

One revolution was now pregnant with another, and the effect itself became a cause : And as the Greeks had seen such a succession of different families on the throne, they were not devoted to any ; and since fortune had created so many emperors out of all classes of people, no birth was so obscure, and no merit so inconsiderable as to be destitute of hope.

Several examples which had been familiar to the nation, modelled the genius of the people in general, and formed a system of manners which reigned as imperiously as the laws.

It should seem that great enterprizes, among us, are more impracticable than they were to the ancients ; it is very difficult to conceal them, because intelligence is now become so manageable, that every prince has ministers in each court, and traitors may possibly be lurking in all the cabinets of majesty.

The invention of posts has given wings to information, and can immediately wait it to all parts.

As

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As great undertakings are not to be accomplished without money, and as merchants are masters of it since the invention of bills of exchange; their affairs are always connected with the secrets of state, and they neglect nothing to penetrate into those depths.

The fluctuations in exchange, without any visible cause, entice numbers of people to search after it, and some of them find it at last to their cost.

The invention of printing, which has put books into the hands of all the world; the improvements in engraving, which have made geographic charts so common; in a word, the establishment of political papers, give every individual a knowledge of the general interest, sufficient enough to instruct him in all the private transactions.

Conspiracies in a state are now become very difficult, because since the establishment of posts, all the secrets of particular persons are in the power of the publick.

Princes may act with promptitude, because all the power of the state is in their possession. Conspirators must proceed with caution, because they are destitute of expedients; and since at present all transactions are more easily discovered, those who form designs against a government are generally detected before they can adjust their schemes.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*The Weakness of the Eastern Empire.*

**P**HOCAS, amidst the general confusion of affairs, being unsettled in his new dignity, HERACLIUS came from Africa, and caused him to be murdered; at the same time he found the provinces invaded and the legions destroyed.

As soon as this prince had, in some measure, remedied these disasters, the Arabians quitted their own country, to extend the empire and religion which MOHAMMED had founded by their cooperation.

No people ever made so rapid a progress; for they immediately conquered Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Africa, and then turned their hostilities against the Persians.

God permitted his religion to be laid low, in so many places where it once had been predominant; not that it now ceased to be the object of his providential care, but because it always either in its state of glory or depression produces its natural effect, which is the sanctification of the soul.

The welfare of religion has no similitude to the prosperity of empires, and we are told by a celebrated author, that it may well be distempered, since malady itself is the true state of a christian; to which we  
may

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may add, that the humiliations and dispersion of the church, the destructions of her temples, and the persecutions of her martyrs, are eminent seasons of her glory ; but when she appears triumphant to the eyes of the world, she is generally sinking in adversity.

We are not to have recourse to enthusiasm alone to clear up this memorable event of the Arabian conquests, which spread through so many countries : The Saracens had been long distinguished among the auxiliaries of Rome, and Persia ; and they, as well as the Osroenians, were the expertest archers in the world. Alexander Severus and Maximin had engaged them as much as possible in their service, and they were extremely useful in the wars with the Germans, to whom their arrows were fatal at a great distance. The Goths themselves<sup>1</sup>, in the reign of Valens, were incapable of resisting them : In a word, they at that time were the best cavalry in the world.

We have already observed, that the legions raised in Europe were much preferable to those of Asia, but it was directly contrary with respect to the cavalry ; I mean that of the Parthians, the Osroenians, and the Saracens. This was the power that stopped the full career of the Roman conquests, because, after the death of Antio-

<sup>1</sup> Zozim. l. iv.



thus, a new nation of Tartars, who had the best cavalry of any people, made themselves masters of the Upper Asia.

This cavalry was heavy <sup>m</sup>, and that of Europe light, quite contrary to the present nature of their military equipage. Holland and Friseland were not as yet won from the waters; and <sup>n</sup> Germany was full of woods, lakes, and marshes, where the cavalry were of little importance.

When a free passage was opened to the great rivers, the stagnant waters shrunk from those marshes, and Germany assumed a new surface. Many changes were effected by the works of Valentinian <sup>o</sup> on the Neckar, and those of the Romans on the Rhine; and commerce being once established, those countries which did not originally produce horses <sup>p</sup>, began to propagate the breed, and the inhabitants made great use of those animals.

Constantine <sup>q</sup>, the son of Heraclius, having been poisoned, and his son Constance

<sup>m</sup> See the account given by Zosimus of the cavalry of Aurelian, and that of Palmyra. See likewise what Ammian Marcellinus relates of the Persian cavalry.

<sup>n</sup> The greatest part of that country was then covered with water, but the art of man has since made it habitable and commodious.

<sup>o</sup> See Ammian. Marcellin. l. xxvii.

<sup>p</sup> Cæsar represents the German horses as too small, and good for little.

<sup>q</sup> Zonaras's life of Constantine the Bearded.

slain in Sicily, CONSTANTINE the bearded, his eldest son, succeeded to the empire; but the grandees of the eastern provinces being assembled on this occasion, were determined to crown the other brothers of this prince jointly with himself; alledging, that as it was indispensably necessary for them to believe in the Trinity, so it was reasonable they should be governed by three emperors.

The Grecian history is crowded with proceedings as extraordinary as this, and a low turn of mind being then the characteristic of that nation, their former wisdom was no longer conspicuous in their actions, and the empire became a scene of troubles and revolutions, to which it was impossible to assign any preparatory motives.

An universal bigotry had stupified and emasculated the whole empire. Constantinople was the only place in the east where christianity was predominant, and likewise, where the pusillanimous indolence, and degrading softness of the Asiatic nations, were blended with devotion itself. Of a thousand instances that might be alledged, I shall only mention the conduct of Philippicus the general of Maurice's army, who being on the point of charging the enemy in the field, burst into tears<sup>r</sup> when he sud-

<sup>r</sup> History of the emperor Maurice by Theophylact. l. ii. c. iii.

denly considered what numbers of mankind were then to be destroyed.

The tears of the Arabians <sup>f</sup> flowed from a very different source, when they wept with regret that their general had agreed to a truce which frustrated their intended effusion of christian blood.

There is a total difference between an army of fanatics, and another of bigots; and it evidently appeared in a late memorable revolution, in which Cromwel's army resembled the Arabians, whilst the Irish and Scottish forces were like the Greeks.

A gross superstition which debases the mind as effectually as true religion exalts it, had reduced all virtue, and devout confidence in the Deity, to a stupid veneration for images; and history presents us with generals who would raise a siege, <sup>v</sup> or surrender a city for <sup>x</sup> the gallant acquisition of a relick.

Christianity degenerated under the Grecian empire into as many corruptions as were intermixed with it in our time by the Muscovites, till the Czar Peter the first new modelled that nation, and introduced more changes into the dominions he govern-

<sup>f</sup> Ockley's history of the conquest of Syria, Persia, and Egypt, by the Saracens.

<sup>v</sup> Life of Lacapena by Zonaras.

<sup>x</sup> Life of John Comnenus by Nicetas.

ed than are usually established in those which conquerors usurp.

We may easily believe the Greeks were infected with idolatry. There can be no suspicion that the Italians and Germans were but coldly devoted to external worship; and yet when the Greek Historians take notice of the contempt express'd by the Italians for images and relics, one would be apt to compare them with the modern zealots against Calvin. Nicetas informs us, that the Germans, in their march to the Holy Land, were received by the Armenians as friends, because they did not offer any adoration to images. Now, if the Italians and Germans did not sufficiently reverence images, in the apprehension of the Greeks, what an enormous veneration must then be paid to them by this people?

The east was on the point of being made the scene of such a revolution, as happened about two centuries ago in the west, when, upon the revival of learning, the abuses and corruptions in religion became evident to all, and as every person was inquisitive after a proper remedy, so there were some so bold and untractable as to rend the church by divisions, instead of restoring it to its original purity by a due reformation.

LEO ISRAURUS, CONSTANTINE COPRONYMUS, and LEO his son were implacable against images, and when the worship of  
O 5 them.



them had been re-established by the empress Irene, LEO the Arminian, MICHAEL the the Stammerer, and THEOPHILUS, abolished them again. These princes imagined they could not moderate that worship unless they destroyed it effectually; they likewise turned their hostilities against the Monks<sup>y</sup>, who incommoded the state, and as their proceedings were always carried into extremes, they endeavoured to exterminate that fraternity instead of regulating them in a proper manner.

The monks<sup>a</sup> being accused of idolatry by those who favoured the new opinions, retorted, in their turn, upon their adversaries, and accused them of magical practices,<sup>b</sup> and then calling upon the people to behold the churches, that were divested of images, and the other furniture, which, till that time had been the objects of adoration, they created a belief in their flock,

<sup>y</sup> Valens, many years before this event, made a law to compel the monks to serve the government in the army in times of war, and caused all who disobeyed that injunction, to be slain.

<sup>a</sup> These circumstances relating to the monks, cannot fix any criminal imputation on their order in general; for it would be unjust to represent an institution as pernicious because it may happen to be abused in some particular countries and at certain periods of time

<sup>b</sup> Leo the grammarian's lives of Leo the Arminian, and Theophilus. Suidas, under the article of Constantine the son of Leo.

that

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that these holy places, must certainly be profaned by daily sacrifices to Dæmons.

The controversy relating to images, was connected with very delicate circumstances, which kindled it into a raging flame, and in the event made persons of solid judgment incapable of proposing a moderate worship. The dispute included the tender article of power, and the monks having seized it, in consequence of their spiritual usurpations, they could neither enlarge nor maintain it but by making daily additions to the acts of external adoration, wherein they were so considerably interested. For this reason all oppositions to the establishment of images were considered as so many hostilities against themselves, and when they had succeeded in their pretensions their power was no longer limitable.

This period was remarkable for such a conjuncture as happened some centuries afterwards in the warm disagreement between Barlaam and the Monks of that time, which brought the empire to the verge of destruction. The subject of the dispute was whether the light which encircled Jesus Christ on mount Tabor was created or not. The Monks indeed were indifferent as to either part of the question in debate, but as Barlaam made a direct attack upon that fraternity, they found it consistent with their interest to assert that light to be uncreated.

The war which those emperors who were called Iconoclasts, declared against the Monks, revived some particular principles of government. and offered a plausible pretence for employing the publick revenue, for the publick advantage, and for disengaging the state from every inconvenience that encumbered it.

When I consider the profound ignorance into which the Grecian priests had plunged the laity, it seems natural to compare the former to those Scythians mentioned by Herodotus, \* who caused the eyes of their slaves to be plucked out, that their attention might not be diverted, when they were churning milk for their masters.

When the empress Theodora had reestablished the use of images, the Monks immediately began to corrupt the public devotion, and proceeded even to oppress the secular clergy: They thrust themselves into every beneficial see, <sup>d</sup> and gradually excluded all ecclesiasticks from episcopal promotion. By this proceeding they became unsupportable; and if we draw a parallel between them and the latin clergy, and compare the conduct of our Popes with that of the patriarchs of Constantinople, we shall see in our pontiffs and clergy, a set of men altogether as judicious as the others were irrational.

\* Lib. iv.

<sup>d</sup> Vide Pachymer. l. viii.

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We are presented with a surprizing contradiction in human nature, when we consider that the ministers of religion among the ancient Romans, when they were not made incapable of public employments and civil society, were but little solicitous about either; and that after the establishment of christianity the ecclesiasticks, who were most secluded from temporal affairs, engaged in them with the greatest moderation; but when the Monks, in the declension of the empire, became the sole clergy, these people who were forbidden by a more particular profession, to intermeddle with the transactions of state, embraced all opportunities that could possibly introduce them into the government, and never ceased to fill every place with confusion, and to discompose the world which they pretended to renounce.

There was not any affair of the empire, any particular peace or war, any truce or negotiation, or any private treaty of marriage capable of completion without the ministration of these Monks; they crowded into the cabinets of princes, and composed the greatest part of the national assemblies.

The calamities which resulted from this irreligious officiousness are inconceivable: These ecclesiastic statesmen infused an indolent insignificance into the minds of princes, and communicated a taint of imprudence to  
their



their best actions. Whilst Basilus employed his naval forces in erecting a church to the honour of St. Michael <sup>e</sup>, he abandoned Sicily to the depredations of the Saracens, and suffered them to take Syracuse ; but lest he should be singular in that proceeding, Leo his successor, consigned his fleet to the same employment, and permitted the Barbarians to possess themselves of Tauromenia and the island of Lemnos.

Andronicus Palæologus <sup>f</sup> entirely neglected his maritime power, because he had been assured God was so well satisfied with his zeal for the church's peace, that his enemies would never presume to invade his dominions by sea. He was even apprehensive that the Deity would call him to a strict account for the time he devoted to the necessary affairs of state, and deducted from spiritual attentions.

The Greeks being very loquacious, great disputants and naturally inclinable to sophistry, were perpetually incumbering religion with controversial points; and as the Monks were in great reputation in a court which was always weak in proportion to its corruption ; that court, and those Monks mutually communicated infection to each other, in consequence of which the emperors de-

<sup>e</sup> See the lives of Basilus and Leo by Zonaras and Nicephorus.

<sup>f</sup> Pachymer. l. vii.

voted all their thoughts, sometimes to calm, and frequently to inflame theological disputes, which were always observed to be most frivolous when they were debated with the greatest warmth.

Michael Palæologus <sup>g</sup>, whose reign was so infested by controversies in religion, growing sensible of the melancholy devastations committed by the Turks in Asia, said with a sigh, that the rash zeal of some persons, who, by exclaiming against his conduct had exasperated his subjects against him, made it necessary for him to employ all his cares to accomplish his own preservation, and compelled him to be a tame spectator of the ruin of several provinces. I contented myself, said he, with providing for the security of those distant parts, by the ministration of governors, who being either corrupted by the enemy, or apprehensive of punishment, never acquainted me with the unhappy situation of the people with whose welfare they were intrusted.

The patriarchs of Constantinople had assumed an unlimited power, and as the emperors and their grandees generally retired to the churches, when the people were spirited up to insurrections, the Patriarchs had consequently an opportunity of delivering

<sup>g</sup> Pachymer. l. vii. c. xxix. We have had recourse to the translation of the president Cousin.

them

them up to the popular fury, and never failed to exercise this power as they were directed by any particular fancy, by which means they always became the arbiters of public affairs, though in a very indirect manner.

When the elder Andronicus <sup>h</sup> caused the Patriarch to be admonished not to intermeddle with the transactions of state, but to confine his attention to spiritual affairs, such a request, replied that imperious priest, is as if the body should say to the soul, I don't claim any community with you, and have no occasion for your assistance in the exercise of my functions.

Such monstrous pretensions became insupportable to princes, and the Patriarchs were frequently divested of their sees. But such a proceeding, in a superstitious nation, who detested all the ecclesiastical functions of the Patriarch whom they considered as an intruder, produced continual schisms, each particular Patriarch, the old, the new, and the last elected, being supported by his own set of partisans.

Such contentions as these were much more pernicious than any disagreements on points of doctrine, because they resembled an hydra to whom every defeat was a renovation.

<sup>h</sup> Palæologus. See the history of the two emperors of this name written by Cantacuzenus, l. i. c. 50.

## DECLENSION of the ROMANS. 305

The rage of disputation became so natural to the Greeks, that Cantacuzenus<sup>i</sup>, when he took Constantinople found the emperor John and his empress engaged in a council which had been summoned against some adversaries of the Monks: And when Mohammed the second besieged that city<sup>k</sup> the emperor could not suppress the theological animosities, and the council of Florence<sup>l</sup> engaged the general attention much more than the Turkish army.

As every person, in common disputes, is sensible he may be deceived, a tenacious and untractable spirit seldom prevails to any extremum, but in those controversies where religion is the subject, for there, as every person from the nature of the point in debate becomes persuaded that his own opinion is true, he grows exasperated against those, who, instead of concurring with his sentiments, endeavour to make him a convert to their own.

Those who may happen to read the history written by Pachymerus, will be effec-

<sup>i</sup> Cantacuzen l. iii. c. 99.

<sup>k</sup> Hist. of the last Palæologi by Ducas.

<sup>l</sup> The question in debate was whether a congregation who heard mass from a priest who had consented to pacifick measures, ought not to have fled from him as if he had been a destructive flame: The great church was accounted a profane temple, and the monk Genadius hurl'd his anathema's against all who were desirous of peace.

tually



tually convinced of the unalterable inability of divines to accommodate their own disagreements, and will see an emperor <sup>m</sup> who spent his days in assembling people of that class listening to their disputations and reproaching them for the inflexibility of their opinions: They will likewise behold another engaged with a hydra of controversies that were perpetually rising to new life, and will be sensible that the same pacific methods and persevering patience, the same inclination to finish their contentions; in a word, the same artless pliancy to their intrigues joined with the same deference to their aversions will never reconcile these implacable ecclesiastics while the world endures.

We shall present the reader with a remarkable instance of the disposition we have been describing: The Partisans of the patriarch Arsenus <sup>n</sup>, were prevailed upon, by the solicitations of the emperor, to come into a treaty with those who were in the interest of the patriarch Joseph. This treaty specified that both parties should write down their several pretensions, and then throw the two papers which contained them into a pan of live coals, and if one of them should remain unconsumed, they were then

<sup>m</sup> Andronicus Palæologus.

<sup>n</sup> Pachymer. l. vii.

to acquiesce with that determination from heaven; but if both should happen to be burnt, the parties were no longer to persist in their demands. The fire destroyed the two papers, the factions were reconciled, and the peace continued for a day. The next morning they pretended that the renunciation of their claims ought to flow from an internal persuasion, and not from chance, and from that moment the contention was renewed with greater animosity than ever.

The disputes of divines should always be considered with great attention; but at the same time this ought to be concealed as much as possible, because, any visible solicitude to calm the contending parties never fails to credit their singularities, and consequently tempts them to believe their sentiments are of that importance as to comprehend the welfare of the state and the security of the sovereign.

It is altogether as impracticable to decide the disagreements of clergymen by attending to their affected subtilties, as it would be to abolish duels by erecting a court, with a delegation to trace a point of honour through all its refinements.

Such was the imprudence of the Greek emperors, that when a religious controversy had been lulled asleep by time, they again awakened it in all its rage. Justinian, Heraclius,

raclius, and Manuel Comnenus proposed articles of faith to their ecclesiastics and laity who would certainly have been deceived in the truth though it had flowed from the lips of those princes in all its purity. And as they were always defective in forms, and generally in essentials, and grew desirous of displaying their penetration, which they might have manifested to more advantage in other affairs confided to their judgment; they engaged in vain disputes on the nature of God, who, as he withdraws himself from the proud curiosity of the learned, so he veils the majesty of his existence as effectually from the great men of the earth.

'Tis an error to believe any human power can be absolute and infallible in these respects, for such there never was, nor ever will be imparted to any mortal. The largest extent of temporal authority is confined to certain limitations, and when the grand seignior ordains a new taxation at Constantinople, the universal murmurs of his subjects make him sensible of those restrictions of his power which till then were concealed from his observation. A Persian monarch may indeed compel a son to murder his father, or oblige a parent to plunge his dagger into the heart of his child, but he can never force his subjects to drink wine. There is a general principle in every nation which is the invariable basis of power,  
and

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and when once this principle is too much loaded, it infallibly shrinks into smaller dimensions.

An unacquaintedness with the true nature and limits of ecclesiastical and secular power, was the most pernicious source of all the calamities that befel the Greeks, and involved both priests and people in perpetual errors.

This great distinction, which constitutes all the tranquillity of a nation, is founded not only on religion, but on reason and nature, which never confound things really distinct in themselves, and which can only subsist in consequence of that very distinction.

Though the priesthood among the ancient Romans did not form a separate body, yet the distinction we have been representing, was as well known to them, as it can be to us. Clodius had consecrated the house of Cicero to the goddess of Liberty, but when that great orator returned from his exile, he did not fail to demand it as his lawful property : The Pontiffs were of opinion, that if it had been so consecrated without an express order obtained from the people it might be restored to him without any violation of religion. They have declared says Cicero<sup>o</sup>, that they only examined the

<sup>o</sup> Epist. ad Attic. l. iv.



validity of the consecration and not the law enacted by the people, and that they had decided the first article as pontiffs, and the second, in the quality of senators.

## CHAPTER XXV.

1. *The Duration of the Eastern Empire accounted for.*
2. *Its Destruction.*

**A**FTER this account of the Grecian empire, it seems natural to enquire how it could possibly subsist so long, and I believe sufficient reasons may be assigned for that duration.

The Arabians having invaded the empire and conquered several provinces, their chiefs became competitors for the Khalifat, and the flame of their first zeal only burst out in civil dissensions.

The same people having conquered Persia and afterwards divided and weakened themselves in that country, the Greeks were no longer obliged to keep the principal forces of the empire stationed on the banks of Euphrates.

Callinicus an architect, who came from Syria to Constantinople, invented an artificial flame, which was easily ventilated into a point by means of a tube, and was of such a peculiar nature, that water and every other substance which extinguish common

### DECLENSION *of the* ROMANS. 311

mon fire did but increase the violence of this. The Greeks were in possession of it for several years, and managed it in such a manner as made it capable of firing their enemies ships, particularly the Arabian fleet which sailed from Africa or the Syrian coasts to invade them even in Constantinople.

This flame was ranked among the secrets of state, and Constantine Porphyrogenitus in his treatise on the Administration of the empire, and which he dedicated to his son Romanus, advises him to tell the Barbarians, when they should desire him to give them any of the Grecian fire, that he was not permitted to part with it, because an angel, who presented it the emperor Constantine, commanding him to refuse it to all other nations, and that those who had disobeyed that injunction were consumed by a fire from heaven the moment they entered into the church.

Constantinople was the greatest, and almost the only city of commerce in the world; for the Goths on the one side, and the Arabians on the other, had ruined all manner of traffic and industry in every other part. The silken manufactures were brought thither from Persia, and were even neglected in that country since the Arabian invasion. We may add to this that the  
Greeks

Greeks were masters at sea, which opened an immense flow of riches into the state, and proved an inexhaustible source of relief in all its emergencies; and if at any time there seemed to be any declension of the public affluence, it was immediately recruited by a new accession.

We shall justify this observation by a remarkable instance: The elder Andronicus Comnenus, tho' he was the Nero of the Greeks, yet amidst all his vices he was indefatigable in the suppression of injustice and vexations in the grandees, and it is a known fact, that during the three years of his reign he restored several provinces to their ancient splendor.

In fine, the Barbarians having once fixed their settlement on the banks of the Danube, were no longer so formidable to the empire as before, but rather became useful to it as a barrier against other barbarous nations. And thus whilst the empire was harassed by any bad government, some particular incidents were always in reserve for its relief. Thus we see Spain and Portugal in a condition, amidst all their weakness, to support themselves with the treasures of the Indies: The temporal dominions of the Pope owe their safety to the respect paid to their sovereign, and the rovers of Barbary derive their security from the obstructions they  
fasten

DECLENSION *of the* ROMANS. 313

fasten upon the commerce of lesser <sup>p</sup> nations, and the very piracies of these people on inferior states, make them serviceable in their turn to the greater.

The Turkish empire is at present in the same state of declension to which that of the Greeks was formerly <sup>q</sup> sunk, but in all probability it will still subsist a long time; for should any prince endanger it by pursuing his conquests to an immoderate extent, it will always be defended by the three trading powers of Europe, who are too sensible of their own interests ever to be unconcerned spectators of its fall.

It is happy for these trading powers, that God has permitted Turks and Spaniards to be in the world, for of all nations they are the most proper to enjoy a great empire with insignificance.

In the time of Basilus Porphyrogenitus, the Arabian power came to its period in Persia. Mohammed the son of Sambrael,

<sup>p</sup> They infest the navigation of the Italians in the Mediterranean.

<sup>q</sup> All projects of this nature against the Turks, and particularly such as have any similitude to that which was formed in the papacy of Leo the tenth, by which it was concerted, that the emperor should march to Constantinople through Bosnia; the king of France through Albania and Greece, whilst the maritime powers were to embark at their several ports; I say such projects were never seriously intended, or were framed at least by those who were altogether unacquainted with the true constitution of Europe.

P

who



who was then sovereign of that empire, invited four thousand Turks from the north, in the quality of auxiliaries; but, upon a sudden dissatisfaction conceived by this prince, he sent an army against them, which was soon put to flight by the Turks. Mohammed, in the height of his indignation against his pusillanimous soldiers, gave orders that they should pass before him habited like women; but they disappointed his anger and joined the Turks: upon which the united army immediately dislodged a garrison which was stationed to guard a bridge over the Araxes, and opened a free passage to a vast body of their countrymen.

When they had extended their conquests through Persia, they spread themselves from east to west over the territories of the empire, and Romanus Diogenes, who endeavoured to oppose their progress, became their prisoner; after which they subdued all the Asiatic dominions of the Greeks down to the Bosphorus.

Some time after this event the Latins invaded the western regions, in the reign of Alexis Comnenus. An unhappy schism had for a long time infused an implacable hatred between the nations of two different communions, and would have produced fatal effects much sooner, had not the Italians been more attentive to check the German emperors whom they feared, than they were  
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to distress the Greek emperors whom they only hated.

Affairs were in this situation, when all Europe imbibed a religious belief, that the place where Jesus Christ was born, as well as that where he accomplished his passion, being profaned by the infidels, the surest atonement they could make for their own sins, would be to dispossess those Barbarians of their acquisitions by force of arms. Europe at that time swarmed with people who were fond of war, and had many crimes to expiate, and as it was proposed to them to obtain their remission by indulging their prevailing passion, every man armed himself for the crusade.

When this consecrated army arrived in the east, they besieged and made themselves masters of Nice, which they restored to the Greeks; and whilst the Infidels were seized with a general consternation, Alexis and John Comnenus chased the Turks to the banks of Euphrates.

But as advantagious as these crusades might be to the Greeks, the emperors trembled to see such a succession of fierce heroes and formidable armies marching thro' the heart of their dominions.

This induced them to leave nothing unattempted that might create a dissatisfaction in Europe at these expeditions; and the votaries to the cross were continually ensnar-

ed by every instance of treachery that could possibly be expected from a timorous enemy.

It must be acknowledged that the French, who promoted these expeditions, had not practised any conduct that could render their presence very supportable; and we may judge by the invectives of Anna Comnena against our nation, that we act without much precaution in foreign countries, and were at that time chargeable with the same exceptionable freedoms we are reproached for at this day.

A French nobleman was going to seat himself upon the emperor's throne, but earl Baldwin caught him by the arm; You ought to know, said he, that when we are in any country whatever, 'tis proper to comply with the customs that prevail there. What a clown is He, replied the other, to sit whilst so many captains are standing?

The Germans, who came after the French, and were the most civil and undesigning people in the world<sup>r</sup>, suffered very severely for our follies, and were continually embarrassed with a set of dispositions that had been sufficiently irritated by our countrymen against all foreigners.

In fine, the aversion of those eastern people was worked up to the highest extreme;

<sup>r</sup> History of Manuel Comnenus by Nicetas, l. i.

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## DECLENSION of the ROMANS. 317

and this with some incivilities offered to the Venetian merchants, operating upon the ambition, avarice, and false zeal of that nation as well as the French, determined them to form a crusade against the Greeks.

The united army of these two European nations found their enemies altogether as pusillanimous and unwarlike as the Chinese appeared to the Tartars in our time. The Frenchmen ridiculed their effeminate habit<sup>f</sup>, and walked through the streets of Constantinople dressed in flowered mantles, and carrying pens and paper in their hands, in derision to that nation, who had degenerated from all military discipline; and when the war was over, they refused to admit any Greeks into their troops.

The Venetians and French soon after declared for the western empire, and transferred the imperial throne to the earl of Flanders, whose dominions being very distant, could not create any jealousy in the Italians. The Greeks still supported themselves in the east, being separated from the Turks by a chain of mountains, and divided from the Italians by the sea.

The Latins, who found no obstacles in their conquests, met with many in their settlement. The Greeks returned from Asia

<sup>f</sup> Nicet. History of the eastern transactions after the taking of Constantinople, c. iii.



into Europe, retook Constantinople, and seized the greatest part of the west.

This new empire however was but a faint shadow of the former, and had no solid power for its basis.

It comprehended few territories in Asia, besides the provinces on this side the Meander and Sangar, and most of those in Europe were parcel'd out into small sovereignties.

We may add to this, that during the sixty years the Latins were possessed of Constantinople, the conquered people being dispersed and the victors engaged in war, all commerce was transferred to the cities in Italy, and Constantinople became divested of its riches.

The commerce even of the inland countries was carried on by the Latins. The Greeks<sup>t</sup>, who were but newly re-established, and were likewise alarmed with innumerable apprehensions, became desirous to ingratiate themselves with the Genoese, by granting them a permission to traffic without paying any duties; and as they were unwilling to irritate the Venetians, who had not accepted of peace, but only consented to a truce, these were likewise discharged from the same payments.

Tho' Manuel Comnenus had suffered the navigation of the empire to decline before

<sup>t</sup> Cantacuzen. l. iv.

## DECLENSION *of the* ROMANS. 319

Constantinople was taken, yet it could be easily re-established, since commerce still subsisted; but when all maritime affairs became entirely neglected under the new empire, the mischief grew remediless, because the power of the empire was daily declining.

This state, which extended its dominion over many islands, and was intersected by the sea, which likewise surrounded several of its territories, was entirely unprovided of ships. The former communication no longer subsisted between the provinces: the inhabitants<sup>v</sup> were obliged to shelter themselves in the inland parts from pyrates, and when they thought themselves safe in such a sanctuary, they soon found it necessary to retire into the fortresses, to preserve themselves from the hostilities of the Turks.

These barbarous people were at that time engaged in a peculiar war against the Greeks, and might properly be called hunters of men. They sometimes marched two hundred leagues into a country to accomplish their depredations; and as they were in subjection to several sultans<sup>x</sup>, it was impossible to purchase a peace from every tribe; and to procure it from any particular parties, was altogether insignificant. These Barbarians had embraced Mohammedism,

<sup>v</sup> Pachymer. l. vii.

<sup>x</sup> Canacuzen. l. iii. c. 96. Pachymer. l. xi. c. 9.

and their zeal for that religion strangely prompted them to ravage the christian territories: Besides, as they were the most unamiable people on earth<sup>y</sup>, and married to wives as disagreeable as themselves, the moment they were acquainted with the Grecian women, all the rest of that sex became insupportable to them, and those beauteous females were continually exposed to the brutal passion of these Barbarians<sup>z</sup>. In fine, they had been always accustomed to invade the properties of other people,

<sup>y</sup> This circumstance gave birth to a northern tradition related by Jornandes the Goth: That Phillimer, king of the Goths, having made an inroad into the Getic territories, found several women who were force-resses, and drove them to a great distance from his army; after which those female Magicians wandered in the deserts, where that species of Dæmons called Incubi, consorted with them, and by their amorous familiarities produced the nation of the Huns. *Genus ferocissimum quod fuit primum inter paludes minutum, tetrum, atque exile, nec aliud voce notum, nisi quæ humani sermonis imaginem assignabat. i. e.* A fierce and savage people, who lived sequestered from the rest of mankind, among fens and marshes, ghastly and haggard in their persons, and whose voices were only an imperfect articulation of human speech.

<sup>z</sup> Michael Ducas's hist. of John Manuel, John and Constantine, c. b. Constantine Porphyrogenitus observes, at the beginning of his extract of the embassies, that when the Barbarians came to Constantinople, the Romans ought to have been very cautious of shewing them the grandeur of their riches, and the beauty of their wives.

and

## DECLENSION *of the* ROMANS. 321

and were the same Huns who had formerly involved the Roman empire in so many calamities.

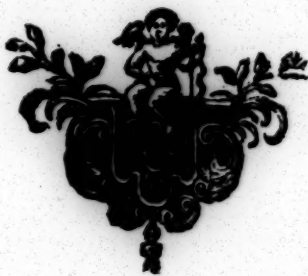
The Turks broke in like a deluge upon the shattered remains of the Grecian empire in Asia, and those of the inhabitants who were happy enough to escape their fury, fled before them to the Bosphorus, from whence such as could accommodate themselves with ships, sailed to those parts of the empire that were situated in Europe, which occasioned a considerable addition to the number of the inhabitants, tho' they were diminished in a short period of time: For civil wars began to rage with so much fatality, that the two factions invited several Turkish sultans to their assistance<sup>a</sup>, with this extravagant and inhuman stipulation, that all the people of the country, who were made captives from the opposite party, should be carried into slavery; by which means each of those factions concurred in the destruction of their own country with a view of ruining their adversaries.

Bajazet having conquered all the other sultans, the Turks would then have acted agreeably to their future behaviour in the reign of Mohammed II. had not they been in danger of extermination by the Tartars.

<sup>a</sup> See the history of the emperors John Palæologus and John Cantacuzenus, written by Cantacuzenus.



I am now afraid to describe the miseries which resulted from these revolutions, and shall only intimate, that the empire under its last monarchs, being contracted within the suburbs of Constantinople, finished its progress like the Rhine, which shrinks into a rivulet before it loses itself in the ocean.



A DIA-

# A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

SYLLA and EUCRATES.

**S**OME days after Sylla had resigned the dictatorship, I was told the reputation I had among the philosophers made him desirous of seeing me. He was at his house on the Tibur, enjoying the first peaceful moments he had ever known. On coming before him I felt nothing of that confusion which the presence of great men generally occasions in us. And when we were alone, Sylla, said I to him, you have then voluntarily reduced yourself to that middle condition of life which to most men is an affliction. You have resigned that command which your glory and your virtues gave you over all men. Fortune seems to be vexed that she could not raise you to higher honours.

Eucrates, said he, if the eyes of the whole universe are no longer fixed on me, it is the

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fault of human things, which have their prescribed limits, and not owing to me. I imagined I had fulfilled my destiny when I no longer had great things to achieve. I was not made for governing in quiet an enslaved people. I love to obtain victories, to found or overturn states, make alliances, punish usurpers: but as to the little subordinate branches of government, wherein middling geniuses shew themselves to so much advantage, the slow execution of the laws, the discipline of a tame militia, my soul could not employ itself in them.

It is very singular, said I, that you should have mixed so much delicacy with your ambition. We have seen many great men unaffected with the vain pomp and splendor which wait on rulers; but there have been very few insensible of the pleasure of governing, and of having that respect, which is due only to the laws, paid to their humour.

And I, Eucrates, was never less satisfied, than when I saw myself absolute master in Rome; when I looked round me, and found neither rival nor enemy. I thought it would be one day said, that I had only chastised slaves. Would you, said I to myself, have no more men in your country capable of being affected with your glory? And since you establish despotism don't you clearly see, that no prince can come after

I

you

you so cowardly and despicable, whom flattery will not equal to you, and adorn with your name, your titles, and even your virtues?

My lord, you have quite changed the idea I had formed of your conduct. I thought you had ambition, but not a love of glory: I saw very well that you had a high spirit, but I did not suspect that you had a great soul: your whole life seemed to discover you to be one preyed on by lust of power, and who, full of the most destructive passions, cheerfully loaded himself with the shame, the remorse, and even the meanness attached to despotism. For, after all, you sacrificed every thing to your power; you were feared by all the Romans; you discharged, without pity, the functions of the most terrible magistracy that ever subsisted. The senate looked with dread on a defender so relentless. Some one said to you, Sylla, how much Roman blood will you shed? Do you want to command bare walls? You then published those Tables by which the life and death of every citizen were determined.

And it is the shedding so much blood that has enabled me to do the greatest action of my whole life. Had I ruled the Romans with gentleness, what wonder, that weariness, disgust, or caprice should make me resign the government? But I laid down the dictatorship at a time when every one  
thought



thought I entirely owed my safety to my being invested with it. I appeared before the Romans a citizen in the midst of my citizens, and had the boldness to say to them, I am ready to give account of all the blood which I have shed for the republic; I will answer all who shall come to demand of me their fathers, their sons, or their brothers. Every Roman was silent before me.

This great action which you speak of, appears to me very imprudent. The astonishment, indeed, into which you had just thrown the Romans, was of service to you: but how could you dare to talk of vindicating yourself, and taking for judges persons who had so much to revenge on you? Supposing your actions had been only severities while you was in power, they became frightful crimes the moment you was out of power.

Do you call crimes, said he, what saved the republic? Would you have had me quietly see senators betray the senate, for that people, who, imagining that liberty ought to be as extreme as slavery can be, wanted to abolish all authority? The people, kept under by the laws and the weight of the senate, have always endeavoured to overturn both. But he who is so ambitious as to serve them against the senate and the laws, had always ambition enough to become their master. It is thus we have seen

an

an end put to so many republics of Greece and Italy.

To prevent a like evil, the senate hath always been obliged to employ this untractable people in war. It has been forced, against its inclination, to ravage the earth, and reduce so many nations whose subjection is a burden to us. At present, when the universe can furnish no more enemies against us, what would be the fate of the republic? And, without me, would the senate have been able to prevent the people, in their blind fury for liberty, from delivering themselves up to Marius, or to the first tyrant who should have given them hopes of independence?

The gods, who have given to most men a cowardly ambition, have attached to Liberty almost as many evils as to Slavery. But whatever may be the price of this noble Liberty, the gods must be paid it.

The sea swallows up vessels, and lays under water whole countries; yet it is useful to man.

Posterity will decide of what Rome has not as yet ventured to examine: it will find perhaps that I have not shed blood enough, and that all the partisans of Marius have not been proscribed.

I must own, Sylla, you astonish me,  
How! was it to serve your country that you  
spilled

spilled so much blood? and had you no attachment but to her?

Eucrates, said he to me, I had never that predominant love for my Country, of which we find so many examples in the first ages of the republic: and I love Coriolanus, who carried fire and sword to the very walls of his ungrateful city, and made every citizen repent the affront which every citizen had done him, as much as I do him who drove the Gauls from the capitol. I never piqued myself on being the slave or the worshipper of a society of my equals: and this so much boasted love is a passion too popular for such a high spirit as mine. All my actions proceeded from reflexion, and principally from the contempt which I entertained for men. You may judge by the manner in which I treated the only great people in the world, how high my contempt was of all others.

I thought that while I was on the earth I ought to be free. Had I been born among Barbarians, I should have sought to usurp the throne, less to obtain command than to avoid obedience. Born in a Republic I have acquired the glory of a conqueror, in seeking only that of a free man.

When I entered Rome with my troops, I breathed neither rage nor revenge. I passed sentence, without hatred, but also without pity, on astonished Romans. You were  
free

free, said I; and you want to live slaves. No. Die; and you will have the advantage of dying Citizens of a free city.

To deprive of its liberty a city of which I was a citizen, I looked on as the greatest of crimes. I punished that crime; and was little concerned whether I should be the good or the evil genius of the Republic. However, the government of our ancestors has been re-established; the people have expiated all the indignities they put on the nobles; fear has suspended animosities, and Rome never enjoyed such perfect tranquillity.

This it was which determined me to all the bloody tragedies you have seen. Had I lived in those happy days of the Republic, when the citizens, quiet in their houses, presented to the Gods a free soul, you would have seen me pass my whole life in this retreat, which has cost me so much blood and toil.

My lord, said I to him, it is well for mankind, that Heaven has been sparing in the number of such men as you. Born for a middling station, we are overpowered by sublime geniuses. One man's being raised above humanity, costs all the rest too dear.

You looked on the ambition of heroes as a common passion; and made no account of any but a reasoning ambition. The insatiable desire of ruling, which you found in the heart



heart of some citizens, made you resolve to be an extraordinary man : love of liberty determined you to be terrible and cruel. Who would have thought, that a heroism founded on principle would be more destructive than a heroism founded on fury and impetuosity ? The Roman people, you say, beheld you unarmed, and made no attempt on your life. You have escaped one danger ; a greater may await you. A grand offender may one day take advantage of your moderation, and confound you in the croud of a subjected people.

I have acquired a name, said he, which suffices for my safety and the safety of the Roman people. That name prevents all attempts ; there is no ambition, which does not stand in awe of it. Sylla lives ; and his genius is more powerful than that of all the Romans. Sylla is surrounded by Chæroneæ, Orchomenus, and Signion ; Sylla hath given every family in Rome a terrible example within itself : Every Roman will have me always before him, and even in his sleep I shall appear to him covered with blood ; he will imagine he sees the fatal Tables, and reads his name at the head of the proscribed. My laws are murmured at in secret ; they can never be effaced but by floods of Roman blood. Am not I in the midst of Rome ? You will still find with me the javelin I had  
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at Orchomenus, and the buckler I wore on the walls of Athens. Because I have no listors, am I the less Sylla? I have the senate, justice, and the laws for me; my genius, fortune, and glory are for the senate.

I own, said I, that when a person has once made any one tremble, he almost always retains something of the advantage he had over him.

Undoubtedly, said he. I struck men with astonishment; and that was a great deal. Review in your mind the story of my life: you will see that I have drawn all from that principle; and that it has been the soul of all my actions. Call to mind my quarrel with Marius: I was stung with indignation to see a man of no name, proud of the meanness of his birth, attempt to pull down the first families in Rome, and confound them with Plebeians; and at this time I bore all the weight of a great soul. I was young, and I resolved to put myself in a condition to call Marius to account for his insults. For this end, I fought him with his own weapons, that is to say, by victories over the enemies of the Republic.

When I was forced by the caprice of chance to leave Rome, I pursued the same plan: I went to make war on Mithridates; and laboured to destroy Marius by vanquishing the enemy of Marius. While I left that  
Roman

Roman to enjoy his power over the populace, I multiplied his mortifications, and forced him to go every day to the Capitol to return thanks to the Gods for successes which drove him to distraction. I waged a war of reputation against him, a hundred times more cruel than what my legions made on the Barbarian king. Every word I spoke shewed my daringness, and my most considerable actions, always full of haughtiness, were fatal presages for Marius. At last Mithridates sued for peace; the terms were reasonable; and had Rome been in quiet, and my fortune not still wavering, I would have accepted them. But the bad state of my affairs obliged me to make the terms still harder, I demanded that he should destroy his fleet, and restore to the kings his neighbours the territories he had taken from them. I leave you, said I, the kingdom of your ancestors; to you, who ought to thank me that I leave you the hand with which you signed an order for the execution of 100,000 Romans in one day. Mithridates was struck motionless, and Marius trembled in the midst of Rome.

This boldness, which was of such service to me against Mithridates, against Marius, against his son, against Thelisinus, against the people, which supported my dictatorship, also protected my life the day I resigned

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ed the dictatorship ; and that day insures my liberty for ever.

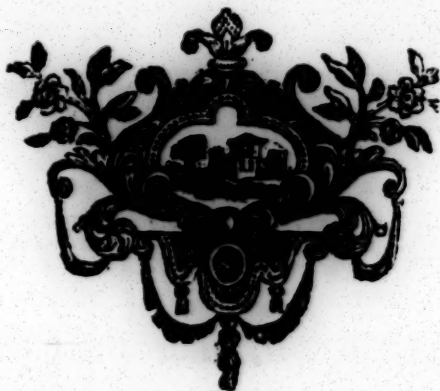
My lord, said I, Marius reasoned in the same manner, when covered with the blood of his enemies and of the Romans, he gave proofs of that boldness which you have punished. You have, it is true, a few more victories, and greater excesses on your side. But in assuming the dictatorship you set an example of the crime which you punished. This is the example which will be followed, and not that of your moderation, which will only be admired.

When the Gods suffered Sylla with impunity to make himself Dictator at Rome, they proscribed Liberty from it for ever. They must work too many miracles, now to root out of the heart of every Roman leader the ambition of reigning. You have taught them, that there is a much surer way to arrive at despotism, and to maintain it without danger. You have divulged the fatal secret, and removed what alone makes good citizens in a Republic too rich and too great, despair of being able to oppress it.

He changed colour, and was silent for a moment. I am only afraid, said he with emotion, of one man, in whom I think I see many Marius's. Chance, or perhaps, a more powerful destiny, made me spare him.



him. My eyes are ever on him, I study his soul, where he hides deep purposes. But if he dare to form the design of commanding men whom I have made my equals, I swear by the Gods, I will punish his insolence.



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